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This thesis conducts a post-structural analysis of the bodily management demanded by the wording and enforcement of dress codes in the secondary school setting as well as potential sites for resistance. Specifically, in chapter two, this project uses the work of three theorists – Judith Butler, Michele Foucault, and Sara Ahmed – to historicize discourses around the body in Western philosophy and sociopolitical life and to apply a post-structural lens to the deconstruction of both the body and the dress codes applied to bodies in secondary school settings. What follows in chapter three is an application of the theoretical deconstruction to actual dress codes from twenty-eight Guilford County public schools and three secular, independent schools in Guilford County, North Carolina. This is accomplished through a process of thematic coding and textual analysis, which reveals the ideal body that students should have, according to the parameters of the dress code: white, male, heteronormative, middle class, and professional. Finally, based on both the historicized philosophical and sociopolitical discourses of the body and the concrete analyses of dress codes in secular secondary schools in Guilford County, chapter four delves into potentials for resistance, both large and small, to dress codes. Having revealed dress codes' multiple vectors of social control, chapter four reveals both the subtle, everyday resistances that are possible through subversive repetition and appropriation as well as the intersectional resistance through which to incite cultural crises in order to broad structural changes in the construction, regulation, surveillance, disciplining, and punishment of bodies. The

overall message that these analyses, both philosophical and concrete, reveal is the highly political meaning of the body, of education, and of the body in education, which makes imperative a future semiotic analysis of language around bodies, language in dress codes, and bodies themselves as well as deep exploration of the process and meaning of learning in a body.

(DE)CONSTRUCTING THE STUDENT BODY: A
POST-STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF
DRESS CODES IN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In August of 2012 seven twelfth grade girls stood in my classroom, shoulders hunched, facial features gathered in scowls, and clad in oversized t-shirts and shorts that stretched close-to or beyond knee-length. They were, in their own words, “dressed like the boys” that day, intent on pushing back against new dress code regulations recently handed down from the administration. These new rules forbade, among many other things, the multi-colored Nike athletic shorts that seemed ubiquitous throughout the school. When I asked them why they chose to dress this way, these girls unanimously claimed that they were simply reacting to what they perceived as an *unfair* rule: the boys could wear their athletic gear because it was “long enough” but girls’ styles were too revealing and too “casual.” Given that this incident took place at an independent (with tuition topping \$20,000 per year), college preparatory school in suburban North Carolina that serves students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, “appropriate” and “casual” are inextricably connected to what is presumed “normal” dress on most Southern college campuses and “appropriate” for participation in the neoliberal marketplace, presumably in the upper echelons of white collar professions like attorneys, doctors, investment bankers, etc.

As the year wore on and the weather turned colder, concerns over shorts dropped away like the red and orange leaves falling from the trees on campus, but new concerns

arose over the tightness of yoga pants, the necessary opacity of leggings, and the visibility of bra straps in chunky, off-the-shoulder winter sweaters. Dress codes, it seems, are dynamic and reactive; dress codes, based in part on how they are written and in part on the varying power of white, middle- class, heteropatriarchal values from person to person and school to school, have the capacity to adapt to variations in outside factors (such as weather) just the same as variations in bodily excess. As a result of growing dissatisfaction on the part of parents, teachers, and students as well as in coincidence with a change in school leadership, the school principal once again revised the dress code in the fall of the 2013-2014 school year in order to orient thinking around “appropriate dress” (which I still deem to be an incredibly loaded phrase) rather than the long-standing specifications of five-inch inseams and forbidden visible underwear lines, but students’, particularly girls’, bodies were still subjected to discipline. Only now this discipline is based on individual teachers’ widely varying heteronormative agendas and patriarchal tendencies. Even though the principal’s aim was to reframe conversation around dress and move away from overly specific rules that blatantly focused on girls’ bodies, what she effectively did was mask that very focus in vague language that nevertheless renders some bodies and body parts “appropriate” and some “inappropriate.” Regardless of how the dress code is worded in the rule book, official regulations on dress and bodily presentation do real and meaningful work at the site of student bodies, working to discipline unruly bodies and produce specific bodies for proper contribution to the neoliberal marketplace and participation in democratic citizenship.

This bodily regulation and its impacts on identity and subjectivity is not limited to the ways in which teachers and administrators enforce or do not enforce dress codes. The movie *Mean Girls* (2004) astutely illustrates the complex codes of conduct, both formal and informal, that exist between and produce hierarchies of power among high school girls. In one key scene Regina George, played by Rachel McAdams, sits at her lunch table with her group of usually adoring friends/cronies. Regina's tray is piled high with bread, fried foods, butter, and sweets, dutifully gathered per the instructions given to her by devious newcomer and frenemy Cady Heron, played by Lindsay Lohan. Though she represents her advice as helping Regina lose the three pounds she recently admitted her desire to shed, Cady's real scheme is to make Regina gain weight in an attempt to lessen her power by destroying what Cady terms as Regina's "hot body." On this day, Regina is wearing trendy, expensive velour sweatpants, for which her friends, upon joining Regina at the lunch table, voice heavy disapproval, given that the only day this group of friends (all white and decidedly middle class or upper middle class) permits themselves to wear sweats is on Fridays. When Regina, feeling safe in her role as the "queen bee," rolls her eyes and sharply replies, "Whatever. Those rules aren't real," Karen, another friend, retorts, "they were real the day I wore that vest." Regina, fed up with this unfounded insubordination, angrily snaps, "Because that vest was disgusting!" At this moment in the movie, a crucial shift in power occurs and it takes place in many ways, all at the site of Regina's now unruly and excessive body. Gretchen, formerly Regina's second-in-command and go-to "yes" person, yells with new-found authority, "You can't sit with us!" Regina, partly in shock and suddenly sullen in her recent weight-gain quietly and

with eyes downcast mutters her last defense, "But sweatpants are all that fits me right now." Everyone at the table averts their eyes from Regina's formerly piercing and increasingly desperate gaze and, when no one comes to her aid, Regina leaves the table the laughing stock of the lunchroom, clearly having been disciplined by the widely varying and fluid disciplinary codes that exist among students.

This scene illustrates the shifting and multivalent concept of power that Michel Foucault (1990) describes in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*. Foucault describes power as constantly generated through discourse; it emerges between and among people in both productive and oppressive ways. In this case, Regina's body becomes the site of oppressive, disciplinary power in a cruel spectacle that incorporates the greater fashion-industrial complex, Regina's close friends, and the patrons in the lunchroom at the time. The interaction that had for so long produced a hierarchy of friendship with Regina at the top then produced the inverse of that hierarchy. In order to be sure that the viewer understands this switch in the dynamic and the importance that Regina's body plays in it, the filmmaker shows Regina – in her rush to stomp away from the coup d'état that just took place – bump into an overweight girl who had previously been the object of Regina's body shaming tactics. "Watch where you're going, fat-ass!" she shouts as Regina face contorts in horrified realization of not only having been officially de-throned but the fact that her body served as the nexus for this seismic shift in the social order.

Both the scene from *Mean Girls* and the moment that took place in my classroom point out formal and informal dress codes as well as bodily performance expectations that exist in many different ways depending on racial, gender, and class contexts. Much like

and in connection with complex identities, dress codes shift from school to school, from lunch table to lunch table, and from body to body, speaking volumes about the greater cultural codes of power at work within schools that perpetuate means of oppression and determine students' positions in greater society. Dress codes do not apply to all bodies equally, nor are they aimed at all bodies the same way, rather they reflect and work to disseminate the values of the dominant heteropatriarchy (Alexander, M.J., 1997), and neoliberalism. Considering the ways in which Foucault asserts power can shift, change, resist, and oppress, dress codes function to orient and re-orient bodies (Ahmed, 2006) toward specific subjectivities as well as to discipline bodies that exceed such (re)orientations. The ways in which dress codes are conceived of, written, and enforced, the ways in which students protest them, and the ways in which students enforce codes of bodily discipline among themselves is emblematic of the ways in which schools simultaneously create and regulate racialized, gendered, and classed bodies. The innumerable creations and regulations that take place within and through an infinite number of interactions each day work in alignment with heteropatriarchal gender norms that perpetuate and punish the hypersexualization of girls' bodies, the hypercriminalization of bodies of color and impoverished bodies, and the impossibility of queer bodies. This creation and regulation is fluid and adaptable and takes place within a gendered matrix that works to naturalize heteropatriarchy while simultaneously obscuring the gendered matrix within which that naturalization takes place in order to discipline student bodies for productive citizenship and participation in the neoliberal marketplace.

The use of dress codes in the secondary school setting is well-established and widely- accepted throughout American society and most schools cite safety, preparing students for the professional world, and minimizing distractions in the learning environment as main motivators for creating and instituting dress codes. Additionally, there is an intense discomfort on the part of secondary schools with the non-male, non-white, non-heteronormative, non-middle-class, non- Judeo-Christian, in-any-way-queer body, and/or any combination of these. Schools operate under a perceived imperative to regulate, neutralize, and punish the body within the school setting in order to better facilitate learning, and this regulation, neutralization, and punishment is afforded to the secondary school by institutionalized white supremacy, patriarchy and heteronormativity, which the school in turn perpetuates by framing dress, bodily adornment, and bodily management in rigid binary terms. This dichotomy of fear and binary regulation sends strong messages to both boys and girls about proper gender roles and performance, sexuality, and desire, impacting burgeoning identities and (re)orienting subjectivities in the process. Existing in a non-normative and therefore unintelligible body that exceeds the strict binary boundaries of neoliberal heteropatriarchy, emphasizing that body, taking joy in it and what it symbolizes challenge schools' aims and drive much of the regulation of dress. Students possessing these unintelligible, impossible bodies marked as deviant remain under-/un-served yet subject to (over) surveillance by secondary education institutions, which perpetuates the state's ability to criminalize marginalized populations based on models of citizenship that demand respectability and socio-economic productivity (Cacho, 2012).

When my seven students stood before me in their best attempt at looking “like boys,” I could not deny the different drags that schools also demand of all students on a daily basis – drags of heteropatriarchy, neoliberal citizenship, and bourgeois morality. Thus, the dress code is performative both in the sense that students must literally perform properly in order to avoid varying forms of punishment, but also in the way that Judith Butler (2011) asserts. The language of the dress code does not represent an essence of a/the body; rather, the body is produced through the language of the dress code. This language sets the limits of representability and intelligibility, thus forming the body according to these limits. To complicate matters further, the language of the dress code is produced within an always-already gendered understanding of naturalized sex and gender. Dress codes therefore collude efforts to obfuscate the discursive production of heteropatriarchy instead rendering it natural, original, and authoritative. Additionally, a naturalized modernist episteme and facile top-down power structures effectively combat student resistance to heteropatriarchal body and identity production, leaving students who, based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status face varying degrees of risk in non-compliance with dress codes, seemingly powerless and oppressed in the face of regulatory expectations of dress and body management.

It is imperative, then, to interrogate how precisely dress codes in secondary schools demand/compose (McRuer, 2006) a straight body that (re)produces whiteness, middle class values, heteronormativity, maleness, and neoliberal citizenship, which facilitates state racism, and biopower (Foucault, 1990) and also works to naturalize heterosexuality and patriarchy through a gendered matrix of intelligibility (Butler, 2006).

In order to interrogate the socio-cultural formation, meaning, and impact of formal and informal dress codes in this project, I make use of three main theorists: Judith Butler's (2006, 2011) theorizing on the gendered matrix through which bodies, sex, and gender come into being, Foucault's (1990, 1977) understanding of power as omnipresent and multivalent, oppressive and productive as well as his analysis of systems of discipline and punishment in European history, and Sara Ahmed's (2006) phenomenology of orientation. I also apply the lens of Butler, Foucault, and Ahmed, to an exploration of a brief history of education in the United States and to real dress codes in Guilford County public school and secular, independent schools in Guilford County, North Carolina. This illuminates the processes of the creation and implementation of dress codes, the bodies these intend to create, and the ways in which they discipline bodies exceeding their parameters. Finally, I make use of these theorists as well as queer theory and theorizing around embodied pedagogy to look for openings for and explore possibilities of resistance.

Frameworks for Analysis: Butler, Foucault, and Ahmed

I use three main theorists to guide and frame my exploration and analysis of dress codes in secondary schools: Judith Butler, Michele Foucault, and Sara Ahmed. I include in this theoretical framework a brief history of the emergence of state-sponsored education in the United States, which helps me consider the ways in which dress codes and analysis thereof are applicable to life inside and outside of school, thereby revealing the lasting impacts of "schooling" in greater United States social, economic, and political life. Additionally, the works of Elizabeth Grosz and Susan Bordo help me concretize my

analyses further by focusing on the significance of the body and the lived experience of the body in considering subjectivity. The study of dress codes from Guilford County Schools' and secular, independent schools in Guilford County, through the lenses of feminist theory, queer theory, and embodiment help me ground my theoretical understandings of gender, sexuality, the body, bodily discipline, and (sexual) orientation in order to consider lived experiences of dress codes and productive sites of resistance.

In order to assess the ways in which dress codes operate to perpetuate and naturalize a gender binary based in heteropatriarchy, I make use of Judith Butler's (2006, 2011) analyses of the heteronormative matrix of intelligibility and the ways in which that matrix naturalizes binary sex and gender as well as heterosexuality while simultaneously obscuring its own constructedness thereby making it most effective. In *Gender Trouble* (2006) Butler argues that the "fact" of sex on which even progressive theorizing around the constructed nature of gender lies is "produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests" (9). Rather than agreeing that "femaleness" or "maleness" are a basic and universal truths about a body, Butler argues that sex actually works "in service of" regulatory instruments, namely the sociopolitical creation and subsequent division of people into defined, intelligible, and therefore governable categories of sexuality and gender. In fact, Butler wonders if "perhaps [sex] was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (9-10). Taking sex, on top of which constructed masculinity and/or femininity are/is layered, to be constructed allows Butler to illustrate the existence of a constructed matrix of intelligibility based on a falsely naturalized

heterosexuality and compulsory gender roles through which a subject becomes viable for participation in society. Crucially, Butler points out that if gender actually comprises “a set of relations” (13), then those relations are always already based on significations emerging from sexual differentiation that is, in fact, constructed. What Butler’s theorizing around gender does here is trouble and confuse positivist approximations of sex and gender in order to ask a larger question about the limits of language and signification in composing and regulating the modern social subject.

In addition to examining the ways in which the heterosexual matrix of intelligibility naturalizes and perpetuates gender and sex, Butler, in *Bodies That Matter* (2011) as well as *Gender Trouble*, examines the impact this naturalization and a masculine signifying economy (Butler, 2006; 18) has on historical and cultural understandings of femininity and the category of “woman.” Through an analysis of Luce Irigaray’s critique of Plato’s (indeed *modernity’s*) conception of female, Butler again illustrates that “if it can be shown that in its constitutive history this ‘irreducible’ materiality [sex] is constructed through a problematic gendered matrix, then the discursive practice by which matter is rendered irreducible simultaneously ontologizes and fixes that gendered matrix in its place. And if the constituted effect of that matrix is taken to be the indisputable ground of bodily life, then it seems that a genealogy of that matrix is foreclosed from critical inquiry” (Butler, 2006; 5). The gendered matrix that creates woman as essentially a receptacle only makes use of phallogocentric economy in order to determine that essence and “[t]he economy that claims to include the feminine as the subordinate term in a binary opposition of masculine/feminine excludes the feminine,

produces the feminine as that which must be excluded for the economy to operate" (Butler, 2006; 36). In other words, the category "woman" is only visible through the lens of "man" thereby eliminating any understanding of woman that does not rely entirely on man. By making this point, Butler illustrates that woman/the feminine actually does not exist, but is rather the inverse of man, thus the center makes use of the margins to define itself as center and the margin as margin.

Dress codes purport to create equality and emphasize the Cartesian split between mind/learning and body/distraction, yet Butler resists this by emphasizing the impact of materiality on identity as well as the ways in which that very materiality is not immune to discourses of sex, gender, sexuality and power and the constantly shifting relations between those components of identity. Thus, students' identities are produced by and (re)produce that racialized, classed, gendered, and sexualized matrix through dress codes and, in order to be viable for participation and accepted by peers and adults alike within the school setting, students must actively perform whiteness, middle class values, and heteronormativity. The dress code works as a concrete, visible representation of the gendered matrix in that it supposes certain things about bodies and connects those suppositions to gender presentation, all the while disguising its work as indicative of the natural tendencies of bodies and as being for the good of students as it will promote learning by minimizing distractions that bodies create in schools. In addition to the gendered and sexed aspects of dress codes, their focus on safety implicates race and class in the matrix of intelligibility thereby necessitating an impossible approximation of whiteness and middle class status on the part of all bodies, regardless of race or

socioeconomic status. Just as maleness, however constructed, is impossible to achieve for femaleness yet is set up as the binary opposite that in fact defines female, whiteness and middle class lifestyle and values become the normalizing center for students of color and impoverished students.

In addition to considering Butler's analysis of sex and gender as constructed and the generation of bodies through a gendered heterosexual matrix of intelligibility, I also make use of her definition of performativity and concept of interpellation in order to situate student bodies and identities within the dress code. In *Bodies That Matter* (2006), Butler uses Althusser's notion of interpellation (81-82) to describe the process by which a subject becomes socially constituted and, in turn, the process whereby an individual acknowledges and responds to ideologies, thereby recognizing themselves as a subject. Thus, when the police officer hails you, they identify you and when you turn in response, you become that which the officer has identified you as. I will consider the dress code, also working as a matrix of intelligibility in the ways described above, as an interpellation that dictates student subjectivity and constitutes them in specific and often violent ways. I will then tie together Butler's understanding of how interpellation, the matrix of intelligibility and language work together to constitute a body by analyzing the performativity of the dress code. That is, that the language of the dress code (and language as a whole) does not represent an essence of the student body; rather, the body is produced through the language of the dress code and other regulatory measures in schools. Thus, language used in schools sets the limits of representability and intelligibility of student bodies, thus forming the body according to those limits and, as I

describe below, dictating students' participation in school life while disciplining and punishing them as needed in order to maintain white, middle class heteropatriarchy and neoliberal values.

In addition to considering the ways in which sex, gender, and sexuality are produced discursively through a gendered heterosexual matrix of intelligibility, I utilize Michel Foucault's theories on the multivalent operations of discourse, power, discipline, punishment, and surveillance. Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (1990) explores the deployment of sexuality in the nineteenth century through analyses of discourse in connection with power, the body, identity, and life situated within a complex historical context guided by changing political and economic structures. Foucault couples the idea of discourse, the infinite and constant interaction(s) of social, political, and economic "life," with power in a matrix-like construction in which he rejects exclusive use of the traditional top-down power model, i.e. the taking-away of life, in favor of a highly localized, pervasive, continuously-reproduced power. To that point, Foucault illustrates how power emerges from and illustrates links between the medieval deployment of alliance (connections based on marriage, kinship, name, and blood) with the deployment of sexuality and recognizes sexuality as "an especially dense transfer point of power: between men and women, young people and old people, parents and offspring teachers, and students..." (Foucault, 1990; 103). For Foucault, discourse joins power and knowledge together and therefore can be something that enables oppressive and insidious forms of power *as well as* points of resistance (Foucault, 1990; 100-101). These multitudes of connections and (re)productions of discourse and power make the

matrix of intelligibility/identity formation extremely dense and contribute to the vastness of the net that the deployment of sexuality casts. The ways in which codes of conduct, though written by “the top,” are created by and disseminate power and ideas about sexuality, patriarchy, whiteness, and neoliberalism as they contribute to identity formation throughout the student body produce/are (re)produced by those students perpetually. Using this idea of power in conjunction with Butler’s analysis of a gendered heterosexual matrix of intelligibility enables me to deconstruct dress codes within their historical and cultural contexts and analyze resulting effects on identity formation and the purposes of educational discourses.

In *Discipline and Punish* (1995) Foucault explores the history of punishment, torture, criminality, incarceration, and surveillance in the Western legal system. He begins with an assessment of the private process of ascertaining the guilt of the accused and the public spectacle of torture and execution prior to the “modern” age beginning in the eighteenth century. In this section, Foucault introduces the concept of the “body-politic” as “a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge” (Foucault, 1995; 28). Here Foucault asserts that the body, specifically the body of the condemned, is a crucial part of the production of knowledge and power in the medieval and early-modern era, an argument I see as relevant in the discussion of dress codes and the function(s) of bodies in twenty-first century schools. In the medieval context and in the absence of the social contract philosophized about in the Enlightenment era, punishment

must be public in order to illustrate the “dissymmetry between the subject who has dared to violate the law and the all-powerful sovereign who displays his strength” (Foucault, 1995; 49). Because schools serve to *create* proper citizen-students from those who are, by virtue of needing to be formed into citizens, not yet ready to participate in the social contract of the (post-)Enlightenment era, justice and punishment during the schooling period of a person’s life operates somewhat similarly to the pre-Enlightenment model in which regulations on dress serve the purpose of creating a top-down power structure, or at least the illusion thereof to students. It is important to note, however, that this process is complicated by the tension between a top-down process and the less centralized regime of power into which students enter upon leaving secondary schooling. Thus, surveillance, discipline, and punishment in schools, as seen through the dress code, is complex and multilayered.

In light of the social contract that guides the society for which schools prepare students to join, it is also important to consider the ways in which punishment changes in the face of emerging Enlightenment philosophy and the establishment of modern thought about socio- political institutions. Following Foucault’s line of thinking, because participants in society engage in the social contract, they have an obligation to the whole of society, the well-being of which becomes the central concern for all. It stands, therefore, that if someone violates the laws that are meant to protect the well-being of all, they injure all. Thus, “a formidable right to punish is established” (Foucault, 1995; 90) in the modern period because “[t]he right to punish has been shifted from the vengeance of the sovereign to the defence of society” (Foucault, 1995; 90). Similarly, dress codes and

their authors and enforcers justify, through an adherence to Cartesian dualism and the ascribing of “productive” virtues to learning/the mind and “destructive” qualities to distraction/the body, punishing bodies that are out of line with heteropatriarchal norms in order to preserve the well-being of all students. What could not be justified through this logic, which obscures the individual and discursive with the collective and natural?

Foucault goes on to explain how the “classical age discovered the body as object and target of power” that produces “an art of the human body... which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful” (Foucault, 1995; 136, 137-138). In order to contribute to the productivity of the student body and hence one’s own productivity, dress codes’ language encourages students to dress “appropriately,” implying which body parts are most unruly and unproductive by specifying which body parts ought to be covered up. Because schools base their goals on the ability of a student to participate productively in the neoliberal marketplace and instill a fear of the consequences that would befall a person who is unable to participate properly, the goal of growing one’s skills and becoming more useful becomes an absolute necessity. Illustrated by Foucault, this necessity-framing artfully entangles the student and the discourse of bodily control. Foucault even points out secondary schools, in addition to hospitals and military regiments, as clear examples of this system at work.

To depart from dress codes momentarily, I look to honor codes as especially convincing illustrations of the modern era's "right to punish" for the common good, the discourse of power that Foucault lays out in *The History of Sexuality* (1990) and that power's connection with citizenship through respectability in schools. For example, the preamble to the honor code at the school where I teach states its intended purpose as to "foster a community of mutual trust and respect," which directly connects students actions, honorable or dishonorable, to their level of respectability and therefore their worth as a member of the community. Attaching rewards, such as being able to leave a test and return to finish it later in the school day, and punishments, such as suspension and expulsion for dishonorable behavior, to those actions in the name of building a community continuously (re)deploys the same matrix-like power formation that Foucault describes. Inherent in a systematic dissemination of power like an honor code is a self-monitoring system akin to Jeremy Bentham's panopticon (Foucault, 1995) in which prisoners are constantly under surveillance, the threat of which translates into intense self-monitoring and scrutiny. In the case of a school honor code, students self-monitor as well as monitor each other throughout the school. Additionally, constructing an honor code in which the health and well-being of the entire community relies on students' ability to behave honorably creates an environment in which students feel obligated to closely monitor each other and, in the event that a student witnesses another student's dishonorable behavior, turn in each other in order to preserve the community. Furthermore, having an honor board made up entirely of students heightens this panoptical sensation in removing the central surveillance tower and continuously locating

it throughout the student body. Thus, students constantly work within and redeploy the system that enabled their actions to begin with and foster a sense of exceptionalism surrounding honor in their school.

Codes of dress work in similar ways, particularly when students are invited, under the guise of democratic education, to participate in drafting the guidelines, while simultaneously centering respectability on whiteness, middle class values, proper life order, heteronormativity, and patriarchy. Schools have long assumed a proper order of maturation that eliminates sexuality from adolescent years in alignment with the historical context in which compulsory education was conceived. The nineteenth century capitalist marketplace demanded that adolescents finish school equipped with and trained by citizenship skills at which point they would enter the working world, *then* marry, *then* bear children who would enter the same process that had produced them in order to (re)produce that system. Thus, schools, conceived within this environment, and are ill-equipped to deal with a sexual body in the classroom and/or to use it as part of the learning experience (Alexander, B.K., 2005; Lesko, 2001; Pillow, 1997). An overt display of sexuality, perhaps a low-cut shirt or short shorts, make visible a sexual body in school which is most fearsome and immediately hidden or covered (Pillow, 1997). Instead of acknowledging sexuality, schools assume and prioritize a non-sexual student body in line with a capitalist system that demands proper life order and a patriarchal system that locates morality at the site of the female body, making *her* responsible for desexualizing the learning environment. This is necessary for continuing the Industrial

Revolution-era method of schooling to produce proper citizens and workers who will most benefit the state that is delineated through participation in the social contract, yet controlled by wealthy white men.

It is important to note the impact of both race and class on dress codes that then regulate and punish racialized and classed bodies in schools. Anne McClintock (1995) traces the lineage this white heteropatriarchy to the colonization of North America and asserts that colonization represents a “both a poetics of ambivalence and a politics of violence” (28). Using this historical narrative, McClintock connects women as well as people of color to the undiscovered (until the white man arrives, despite the fact that Natives already inhabit that land), virginal, and ultimately penetrable land that the white European man can discover, penetrate, dominate and subjugate, all by virtue of his anatomical maleness as well as its implicit heterosexuality, the powers of which are enabled by Enlightenment-era physiology and anatomy-politics (Somerville, 1994). Andrea Smith (2005) asserts that the white male colonizer commits this same violence on white women, stating that “patriarchal gender violence is the process by which colonizers inscribe hierarchy and domination on the bodies of the colonized” (23) and that “the colonization of Native women (as well as other women of color) is part of the project of strengthening white male ownership of white women” (27). This simultaneous and continuous subjugation of women by white men in the context of colonization was imperative in order to normalize and naturalize both whiteness and patriarchy in the face of Native populations who lived in non-patriarchal and often communal (i.e. non-capitalist) settings. Additionally, race and gender are intertwined and interact in complex

and multifaceted ways through the process of colonization and currently. Thus, it is important that I explore race and socioeconomic status as implicated in and regulated by dress codes, all of which is situated in and deeply connected to a history of colonization and white supremacy.

If white supremacy and patriarchy are naturalized, it makes sense to construct codes of dress according to and that function to elevate whiteness and regulate women's bodies. Furthermore, this racialized and gendered matrix of intelligibility is redeployed perpetually, through mainstream media, religions, institutions such as marriage, etc. The language of dress codes and their often explicit focus on girls' bodies (materialized in the absence of or significantly fewer rules pertaining to boys' clothing) as well as bodies of color (materialized in the volume of rules pertaining to gang clothing and clothing styles associated with movements popularized by people of color) make the actions of boys and white students in school and therefore the well-being of the entire school community contingent upon girls' and bodies of color. Regulations on skirt length, visibility of underwear lines (through sheer or tight clothing), and exposed cleavage demonstrate the responsibility for the community that is thrust upon girls, often cited as a concern over distraction and the ability of students to focus in class. Similarly, hyper-focus on boys' sagging pants, exposed underwear, and clothing related to gang activity or hip-hop culture demonstrate the responsibility thrust upon students of color, often cited as a concern for safety as well as distracting. This attitude not only reproduces patriarchy, but also works to establish and maintain a culture in which victims of gendered or racialized violence are to blame because they brought the violence upon themselves for being

clothed in some non- normative and therefore unrespectable way(s). Their inability to perform proper white, middle class, heteropatriarchal drag makes them ineligible for citizenship and therefore susceptible to, responsible for, and deserving of institutionalized violence enacted upon them.

So deeply engrained in culture, the ways in which girls, students of color, and working- class or impoverished students dress come to be regulated constantly within the student body, rather than just from the administration (the “top”). Slut-shaming and the constant privileging of white, “professional” styles of dress (though professional in this case is very limiting as it would never include the kinds of clothing that people who work with their hands might need to wear, rather “professional” here indicates thoroughly middle class, managerial occupations) as the model for respectability, illustrated in guidelines for “dress-up” days, or appropriations of street fashions for use by white students whose modifications of those styles recast it as appropriate, elucidate the ways in which *students police themselves*. Schools’ focus on community-building and placing the responsibility for community well-being on student bodies, both in terms of honor and of dress, embody the focus of education on connecting citizenship to white, middle-class, heteropatriarchal norms of respectability and market-oriented neoliberalism. Using Butler’s theories on the gendered matrix of intelligibility and Foucault’s theorizing around power, discourse, surveillance, discipline, and punishment, I explore how these values work through localized, matrix-like conceptions of power to regulate and produce or actively (and violently) expel student bodies in accordance with limited parameters for intelligibility.

In addition to Foucault and Butler, I consider the ways in which Sara Ahmed (2006) uses queer phenomenology to reimagine the term orientation and in doing so argues that orientations function as a kind of directionality and/or line. Ahmed explains that in facing one direction or another, certain objects, of desire or of meaning making for example, are more within reach than those that lie behind or otherwise out of sight. She makes use of aspects of Butler's (2011) theories of performativity and materiality in stating that "the normative can be considered an effect of the repetition of bodily actions over time, which produces what we can call the bodily horizon, a space for action, *which puts some objects and not others in reach*" (Ahmed, 2006; 66, author's emphasis). Thus, materiality and performativity are located securely within the Foucaultian power matrix while simultaneously (re)focusing attention and therefore identity in specific ways. Ahmed continues to draw from Foucault's ideas on power by pointing out the ways in which homosexuality is declared to have an orientation, a deviant tangent from the "straight" orientation, while heterosexuality remains "neutral" (Ahmed, 2006; 69) and follows the line. What follows from this is a brilliant assessment of sexuality and identity formation in terms of lines: having "this line of desire," being "in line," "going off line," and perpetuating the "family line." Making full use of Butler and Foucault, Ahmed asserts that "[t]he body acts upon what is nearby or at hand, and then gets shaped by its directions toward such objects, which keeps other objects beyond the bodily horizon of the straight subject" (Ahmed, 2006; 91). In other words, the body, by virtue of being able to (be) face(d) one way or another, is produced by its surroundings (what it, so positioned, can see or desire), which in turn dictates what the body wants and "who" that

body is. Surely codes of dress and conduct function as orientations whose directionality is meant to impact students' identities, conceptualizations of citizenship, and moral compass. To use Ahmed's metaphor of lines, dress codes "straighten" students according to these concepts, resistance to which necessitates courageous and discursive forms of resistance given the discursive ways in which codes come into being and function to produce certain bodies.

I use Ahmed's analysis in order to emphasize the importance of lived experience and material realities in considering subjectivity. Therefore, it is vital for me to consider the importance of the actual body in my study of dress codes, both as a text itself and its role in students' subjectivities in the secondary school setting. To that end, I use Susan Bordo's (1993) and Elizabeth Grosz's (1994) works on embodiment in order to explore the ways in which bodies are "not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself" (Grosz, 1994; x). Thus considered, I uncover the ways in which bodies play a vital role in one's conception of oneself, the ways in which one reads the world, and the ways in which one is read by the world and how that impacts one's ideas about oneself. Grosz's and Bordo's theorizing around embodiment helps me problematize the previously mentioned mind-body dualism that guides secondary school dress codes and to consider the ways in which embodiment can be a productive starting point for resistance.

Statement of Subjectivity

I will never forget the second time I was “dress coded” in high school. I attended an elite private high school in Atlanta that was majority white (myself included) and majority above average level of intelligence and academic ability. I considered myself in a lower tier, family- income wise, though my family was still upper middle-class and my worldview was highly influenced by the elite social class by which I was surrounded and the social, political, and economic values that accompanied it. The first time I received a one-hour detention was for not wearing shoes outside after school, but the second time pertained directly to my body and the way it wore clothes, took up space, and was in excess of the ideal or at the very least acceptable student body. The moment my teacher singled me out from the group of boys and girls with whom I was standing to tell me that my shorts were not in compliance, I was sickeningly aware of my body, instantly sweating and nearly deaf from the blood rushing to redden my face, and felt morally reprimanded for possessing such a corporeal form. I felt betrayed by my body and conflicted over how to “fit in,” which undoubtedly included displaying properly feminine dress and behavior by wearing the shorts “everyone” had, and existing within the school structure with which I had to comply or risk the academic success, both high school and collegiate, upon which I was told my future as a professional rested.

I possess an “unruly” body, of which I have been painfully aware since my early teenage years. I say painfully because it has been a struggle for me personally and professionally to clothe myself in a way that feels good for me – embracing *my* body, its shape and abilities – but also remains “professional” and not too suggestive (those

boundaries dictated by larger cultural norms and local specific codes of dress), especially in the sanitized/neutralized educational environment of high school. This inner struggle is reflected back to me by the students I see every day in my classroom. Thus, I am doubly engaged with the dress code: my scholastic and professional regulations and my position as a teacher who is supposed to enforce my school's dress code.

At the same time, my whiteness and socioeconomic class afford me a certain degree of privilege as dress codes are often shaped by white, middle class norms. Because dress codes implicitly and explicitly name white, mainstream clothing styles through the male gaze, it follows that the white, heteronormative, middle class, male body becomes the standard by which all bodies are judged and named either in compliance and worthy of learning or excessive and needing punishment. Though my body seeped through the borders of acceptable studenthood twice as mentioned above, I know that I transgressed the code more than those two time and avoided discipline. In my white, middle class body, I experience the world differently than bodies of color, trans bodies, impoverished bodies, and homosexual bodies. The hyper-focus on women's bodies, bodies of color, and impoverished bodies in educational settings, however, gives me a personal entry point into the conversation about what dress codes do and possibilities for resistance.

My vested interest in this project is to understand the ways in which schools work to regulate and discipline students – especially girls, students of color, and impoverished students – with the aim of producing a specific type of student-citizen. Parents, students, and teachers alike consider education to be a neutral project in which depoliticized,

unquestionable, eternally existing truths are taught and learned in the service of helping students live a “good life,” but I wish to challenge the assumptions that knowledge is neutral as well as the kinds of learning that take place within schools. Dress codes represent the very non-neutral learning that takes place within schools with a specific and limiting goal of producing the neoliberal citizen-student. Further, I explore how students both accept and reject the dress code and how it connects to broader identity and cultural frameworks in order to find productive modes of resistance to dress codes and ways to rethink the relationship between bodies and learning in educational spaces. I remain aware of my own negative experiences with the dress code as a student as well as those experiences of students who have confided in me as a teacher and seek to utilize this constructively in my theoretical framing of the problems of dress code.

Epistemological Stance, Methodology, and Method

My work and thought process are rooted in the post-modern and post-structural traditions. Post-modernism seeks to "distance us from and make us skeptical about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self and language that are often taken for granted within and serve as legitimation for contemporary western culture" (Flax, 1990; 41 quoted in Gannon and Davies, 2007; 79). The three main theorists on whose work I base my analysis – Butler, Foucault, and Ahmed – theorize from post-modern and post-structural epistemological stances. For example, Foucault’s work is especially descriptive of post-modernism in "resituating the human subject not as the central heroic and active agent who shapes her own destiny but as the subject who is constituted through particular discourses in particular historical moments" (Gannon and Davies,

2007; 80). According to Gannon and Davies (2007), most who previously used the label “post-modern” have now moved on to post-structuralism. Because post- structuralism uses discourses as the primary site of analysis and is skeptical of “real” or “natural” ontology, this epistemological stance will be particularly useful for examining a practice (creating and enforcing dress codes) within an institution long considered neutral and apolitical: schools. Post-structuralism examines cultural life as if reading a text and takes as its project the deconstruction of those texts in service of the larger project of "making strange that which we take for granted" (Gannon and Davies, 2007; 81). By “making strange” the concept of having a body at school, I locate historical, cultural, social and discursive patterns that constitute oppressive and dominant “realities” in schools (Gannon and Davies, 2007). Significantly, I am aided in reimagining the student body and modes of resistance by post-structuralism’s rejection of essentialism and search for new understandings of power and agency.

In my work I also explore the concept of embodiment and therein reject the modernist mind-body split, or Cartesian dualism. By seeking out an understanding of the lived experience of being in school, I engage some aspects of phenomenology, especially through the work of Sara Ahmed (2006). I also use queer theory and feminist theory to facilitate my analysis of emerging patterns in composition and enforcement of dress codes as well as to connect that analysis with other analyses and studies dealing with dress codes.

My method for this project is a textual analysis, which takes two distinct, but intersecting forms. First, I will conduct close readings, analyses of, and application of

content and theorizing from specific texts. I will focus particularly on the content of works by Butler, Foucault, and Ahmed, in order to develop a framework through which to conduct my second textual analysis, an analysis of dress codes in secular, independent and public schools in Guilford County, North Carolina. I use these two textual analyses together in order to “identify what interpretations [of dress codes and bodies] are possible and likely” (Lockyer, 2008) in secondary schools in order to consider resistance to those codes. My analyses, of both the theorists’ work and the dress codes and bodies under scrutiny in schools, are undoubtedly culturally and socially situated, but combining textual analysis and postmodern approaches indeed “highlight[s] the political dimensions of interpretations of texts” (Lockyer, 2008), which supports my intent to denaturalize the body and the Cartesian dualism at work in the ways schools consider bodies in the learning process.

Through the aforementioned theorists’ ideas on intelligibility and expected performance of bodies, the modern socioeconomic and political functions of discipline and power, and the impact of orientation on desire and performance I conduct a post-structural analysis of dress codes’ impacts on bodies in secondary schools, which uncovers and explores possible modes of resistance and subversion. Specifically, through close readings of passages from *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*, I apply Butler’s theorizing around performativity, interpellation, and intelligibility to both the conceptual intent of and the material realities of dress codes on bodies in schools. Similarly, I conduct close readings of Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* in order to critique the frameworks of power that operate in schools in

the twenty-first century and, it follows, how discipline functions through formal and informal dress codes. Combining these two texts, I pinpoint positivist truths that guide dress codes in secondary schools in order to denaturalize the gendered, raced, and classed body that these codes regulate. This analysis enables me to deconstruct sample codes of conduct from public schools and secular, independent schools in Guilford County through the themes that emerge in my textual analysis. I do this through line-by-line coding of sample dress codes from a variety of public and private schools in Guilford County. The themes I use in this coding connect to the absolute “truths” that I pinpoint schools as using in creating dress codes in chapter two (the thematic framework that I my analyses of Butler and Foucault produce). Finally, my general theorizing through Butler and Foucault in addition to close readings of Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology* and the works of Bordo and Grosz enable me to explore both possibilities for resistance to dress codes and the limitations to that resistance through the concepts of orientation and embodiment.

General Project Outline

This project exposes the structures, operations of power, and dominant discourses that guide dress codes to produce, orient, and discipline bodies in schools as well as possible sites for resistance – open pores in the gendered matrix, so to speak. In chapter two, I explore the genealogy of the body in Western society/politics, frameworks from which dress codes arise, including an understanding of Butler’s (2006) gendered matrix, the paradoxes of neoliberalism and how they apply to modern student experience, both bodily and intellectually, and Foucault’s (1990, 1995) theories on multivalent power and

the history of discipline, punishment and surveillance. Chapter two deconstructs the idea of a dress code as well as the student body, specifically in terms of gender, sexuality, race, class, and professionalism. I frame these theories with a brief historical contextualization of education in the United States as it pertains to styles of dress and other bodily regulations. The questions that guide my inquiry in this chapter are: What is a body and how does a body come to be gendered, classed and racialized? What kinds of discipline, punishment, and surveillance is a body subject to? How are these forces of gendering, racializing, disciplining, punishing, and surveillance as well as the paradoxes of neoliberalism at work in schools and what kinds of student bodies do these forces work to produce? Where are the connections between these processes and the general ideas behind dress codes in secondary schools?

In chapter three I move into a discussion of how dress codes are produced by certain bodies and how dress codes produce certain bodies. In chapter three's analysis, I include a focus on neoliberal values, the respectable citizen-student, specific studies of dress codes from public and secular, independent schools in Guilford County, North Carolina, and Sara Ahmed's (2006) ideas on how the orientations resulting from dress codes impact students. My guiding questions for chapter three are: What is the ideal body that a student should have in school, based on the text of the dress codes? What do specific dress codes and analyses of the impact of modern culture and knowledge-production reveal about the lived experience of the body at school and its impacts on identity formation? What values do dress codes ingrain in students and how are these values produced by and producing student bodies? What is the larger and/or long-term

impact of dress codes on a student's life? What bodies do schools most support or enable in the learning process? What bodies have a more difficult path in learning and thinking in schools?

Finally, in chapter four, I explore possibilities for resistance to dress codes through such avenues as finding portals out of the heteronormative matrix of intelligibility and embodied pedagogy (Alexander, 2005). Since I argue that power relations and systems of regulation, discipline, and punishment operate somewhat similarly to medieval models while also in accordance with modern sociopolitical philosophy, it becomes apparent that students face great consequences and therefore the stakes are extremely high and complicated, even life or death, for them in considering resistance to dress codes. Because of this, it seems that overt resistance (directly disobeying stated dress codes, rejecting school-mandated body management guidelines and restraints, etc.) is nearly impossible and that students' actions must correspond with small fractures or gaps in the matrices of power that operate through and with dress codes.

Additionally, teachers who are attuned to the ways dress codes operate, as I describe in chapters two and three, can make use of embodied pedagogy to pedagogically resist and help reveal the open pores in the matrices of power. Important questions that guide my inquiry into resisting dress codes in chapter four are: With regard to Foucault's definition of power as multivalent, oppressive, and productive, where are the places for both subtle and overt resistance to the dress code? What bodies can and cannot resist? Where are potential points of resistance to dress codes and bodily expectations in

schools? What role(s) can embodied pedagogy play in creating real structural change and fighting neoliberal values and an educational politics of inclusion and exclusion (Spade, 2011)? Overall, by exploring possible sites of resistance and subversion with regard to dress and body management/discipline in secondary schools, I reiterate the ways in which bodies are constructed by social institutions and problematize (as Judith Butler does) the idea of a natural body that dress code policy is meant to “protect” and resistance is meant to “liberate.”

CHAPTER II

SCHOOLS AS PLACES FOR DESIGNING GENDERED SUBJECTS AND DISCIPLINING DISCURSIVE BODIES

The body is a most peculiar ‘thing,’ for it is never quite reducible to being merely a thing; nor does it ever quite manage to rise above the status of thing. Thus, it is both a thing and a nonthing, an object, but an object which somehow contains or coexists with an interiority, an object able to take itself and others as subjects, a unique kind of object not reducible to other objects. (Grosz, 1994; xi)

...the body, as much as the psyche or the subject, can be regarded as a cultural and historical product (Grosz, 1994; 187)

...culture’s grip on the body is a constant, intimate fact of everyday life. (Bordo, 1993; 17)

Schools are inevitably and inescapably gendered places; from restrooms to locker rooms to separated health classes and sports teams, schools require and produce gendered bodies in a multitude of formal and informal ways. Most students enter these spaces with a keen understanding, whether implicit or explicit, of the ways in which they “are” (determined by and correlated with naturalized sex) one gender and “are not” the other and the expectations and performances that accompany the gender they “are.” Similarly, schools are inevitably disciplined places; from honor codes to behavioral codes to drug/alcohol use policies and from school-wide rules to classroom rules to

extracurricular rules, the disciplinary mechanisms of schooling cast a wide net throughout the process of schooling and impact students on a variety of levels. Most students enter school with some understanding of discipline and the concept of rules though these rules may look different and function differently from student to student based on varying factors including socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, religious practice, etc. (It is important to note here, at the outset of a project centered on embodiment, identity, and subjectivity, the significance of the use of “et cetera” at the end of such a list of identity categories. Judith Butler (2006) asserts that such an “etc.” “is a sign of exhaustion as well as of the illimitable process of signification itself. It is the supplement, the excess that necessarily accompanies any effort to posit identity once and for all” (191). Thus, these categories and this “etc.” serve as a cautionary linguistic sign regarding the limits of language and categorization; a particularly apropos linguistic symbol in this project.)

When the seven twelfth grade girls mentioned in chapter one to this project stood in my classroom protesting changes to the school’s dress code, they performed resistance to the disciplinary mechanisms of the school as well as its gendering mechanisms, all the while emerging as subjects (in this case capable of resistance; i.e. possessing some agency) through those very same mechanisms. Any resistance to the rules of a school relies on the discursive subject claiming agency to perform such resistance through the mechanisms against which they resist, making such resistance and subversion part of the system they seek to change or destroy. In this chapter, I explore, using Judith Butler’s (2006) *Gender Trouble*, the ways in which the

naturalization of sex and accepted theorizing around the construction of gender based on sex work to create a specific kind of gendered body and subject through an already-gendered framework. That framework, both in the sense of the larger cultural framework and the more “localized” or specific framework of the dress code, having produced a certain gendered subject, also demands a normed performance, which further norms and (re)creates the subject through the same framework. This leads me to an exploration of criticism of neoliberalism in order to establish some of the hidden principles, such as morality and decision-making capability that guide both the greater cultural project and the creation of school policy to create this framework. Additionally, the process of norming (the demanded normed performance) corresponds with and expands to the role of discipline, as Foucault (1995) understands it – in combination with law and punishment – to function in Western legal and penal systems since the nineteenth century. I then combine Butler’s analysis of gender and Foucault’s understanding of discipline to the school setting, specifically the creation, revision, implementation, and consequences of school dress codes in general, in order to see the general themes and tensions that arise around having a body in school. Finally, I explore dress codes as orientations, according to Sara Ahmed’s (2006) understanding of the term as directing attention, desire, and overall behavior. What emerges are the specific subjectivities that dress codes aim to create based on white heteropatriarchal norms and values, their (im)possibilities, and their functions within an education system guided by the principles of neoliberalism.

As I illustrate in detail in the third chapter of this project by drawing out common themes in dress codes from Guilford County Public Schools and three secular, independent schools in Guilford County, North Carolina, dress code authors purport that safety, professionalism, and a focus on learning (that supports a Cartesian mind/body split) are their objects in drafting such codes and, unsurprisingly, these dress codes focus on the unruly and the excessive bodies in school spaces. “Unruliness” and “excess,” however, are undoubtedly gendered, classed, and racialized, resulting in the effect of writing and enforcing dress codes as unflinchingly supporting white, middle class, professional, heteropatriarchal norms and values. Making codes even more insidious is the fact that dress code authors and enforcers masterfully spin, whether consciously or unconsciously, such regulation of unruliness and excess as naturalized (e.g. certain kinds of dress reflect certain absolute character flaws; certain body parts are naturally erotic; the ideal “girl’s”/“boy’s” body should look like...), good for the common interest, yet reliant upon individual decision-making, thus reinforcing heteronormative gender and sexuality norms as well as supporting neoliberal values. Butler’s heteronormative matrix of intelligibility is highly visible in dress codes, which rely on positivist truths about bodies and the ways their biology dictates and relates to their subjectivity according to strict and consistent binary gender lines as well as a stringent mind/body split in the Cartesian school of thinking in order to produce defined, intelligible, categorized and regulated students. If dress codes are so

naturalized, accepted as based on individuality and maintenance of the common good as well as falling in line with long-accepted thinking about the division between mind and body, then resistance seems elusive.

I dedicate the fourth chapter of this project to finding places for resistance – the holes in the matrix of intelligibility that dress codes contribute to building. Through this consideration, I also explore which bodies have more or less at stake in resisting and can therefore be more or less effective at challenging dress codes and cultural constructions of bodies. Lastly, it is important in that final chapter to consider if changes occur on a macro or micro level and to question what that means for all bodies, particularly in the context of learning and emerging as subjects.

The (Un)Natural Body: Judith Butler, the Masculine Signifying Economy, and Emerging Subjectivities

Many dress codes determine what boys and girls can and should wear based on their anatomical features and broad cultural understandings (usually based on the white body and male gaze) of what ought to be kept hidden as opposed to what may be made visible. This understanding of the body and its resulting adherence to white, heteronormative gender norms relies heavily on a scientific and medicalized understanding of the body in which physical features must fall into one of only two categories: male or female. Butler (2006) explains a common understanding in feminist theory that sex is naturally biological (that is, unaffected by cultural expectations or values) and gender is culturally constructed according to biological features. Based on cultural norms, each of the two (and only two) genders is associated with

heteronormative expectations (dress, desire, mannerisms, etc.) that are thrust upon the person who possesses one or the other corresponding anatomical sex traits. Butler, however, goes on to refute this explanation, wondering if in fact “the ostensibly natural facts of sex [are] discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests” (9). In other words, Butler posits that sex itself is a gendered category and asserts that in fact “the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all” (10). Thus, Butler goes beyond mainstream feminist theorizing about the cultural construction of gender to decry the idea of “natural” sex entirely. Given that dress codes are based on biological traits of bodies along with the social expectations of the genders associated with those biological traits, to throw the Truth of biology into question unsettles the entire logic upon which dress codes rest on purporting to create safe and harmonious learning environments.

If natural sex (i.e. the anatomical features on which dress codes base their determination about what should and should not be hidden) is indeed constructed and dress codes base their logic on absolute truths about anatomical sex and “corresponding” cultural expectations and limitations of gender, what does this reveal about greater social missions to regulate and discipline bodies and how are schools microcosms of this disciplinary project? “[T]o what extent does the body come into being in and through the mark(s) of gender” (Butler, 2006; 12) which we can see within dress codes? How do dress codes require certain performance of gender, which thereby construct specific subjectivities in students? Butler (2006) refers to the body as shaped by politics, as “[a]lways already a cultural sign” (96) that does not “have a signifiable

existence prior to the mark of [its] gender” (12) and assesses the process through which the body “becomes” sexed and then gendered through an already-constructed (i.e. gendered) set of signifiers that relies on heteronormative parameters of desire and gender performance and the functions of heteropatriarchal power structures as well as a positivist demand for absolute truth and intelligible categorization. Monique Wittig (quoted in Butler, 2006) underscores this by claiming that “‘sex’ is an obligatory injunction for the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize itself in obedience to a historically delimited possibility, and to do this, not once or twice, but as a sustained and repeated corporeal project” (190). If we take Butler’s and Wittig’s reasoning to be correct, then it stands that dress codes, reliant upon naturalized categories of sex and culturally constructed gender norms in line with sex, both of which emerge through a masculinist signifying economy, demand the student body to come into being, have meaning through, perform as, and therefore become (re)signified according to its marks of sex and gender. Thus, gender is a crucial and central disciplinary mechanism (the Foucaultian understanding of which I discuss later in this chapter) deployed on bodies within schools.

It is worth noting here Butler’s (2011) exploration of the ways in which the female body has been philosophized about in Western thought for millennia. To do this, Butler uses Irigaray’s theorizing around the masculinist signifying economy through which the feminine “vessel” is conceptualized and concludes that in fact no truly “feminine” body is possible because the idea of femininity as it has appeared in Western thought is only conceived of through a masculine lens (i.e. signifying

economy), specifically as the opposite of masculinity. For example, the woman is seen/defined as a penetrable receptacle based entirely on the male ability to penetrate rather than on any understanding of unique femininity. Also important in this analysis of feminine and masculine is the limiting of gender to a binary in which no other option is left open. Binaries work to “consolidate ‘identities’ founded on the instituting of the ‘Other’ or a set of Others through exclusion and domination” (Butler, 2006; 182). All of this is important for our understanding of bodies and their significance in schools (through conceptualization and implementation of dress codes) because, as mentioned above, since school dress codes rely on naturalized categories of sex and the anatomical structures assumed to accompany those designations and those categories of sex are conceived of through a gendered lens which renders impossible any feminine as not directly defined as the opposite/lack of masculinity, it becomes clear the patriarchal structures in place within dress codes. What are considered the anatomical features of a girl that ought to be kept hidden in schools are determined through a masculinist signifying economy and reflect heteronormative notions of desire. Furthermore, if ways of having a body are limited to “girl” and “boy,” then a restrictive binary emerges that not only defines “girl” through “boy,” but makes impossible any body other than that which complies (or at least appears to comply) with gender norms of the binary. Dress codes secure the white, heteronormative, middle-class, professional male body by dictating its “opposite” and not accepting anything outside either side of this binary.

In the notion of desire we see once again the importance of anatomy and its sexual significance. In his *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, Michel Foucault (1990)

explores the ways in which nineteenth-century ideas about sexuality were actually deployed as a mechanism of social control and ordering, yet simultaneously naturalized through scientific discourse of the period linking anatomical features to specific and necessary functions (e.g. reproduction) and therefore “instinctual” and natural desires. Furthermore, “sexuality is understood by Foucault to produce ‘sex’ as an artificial concept which effectively extends and disguises the power relations responsible for its genesis” (Butler, 2006; 125), thereby heavily investing the concepts of sex and sexuality with power (though he maintains that power can be used for resistance as well as oppression). Contextually, the continued urbanization and industrialization of the nineteenth century necessitated an orderly and ever-expanding populace, and dichotomizing (heterosexual and homosexual) and moralizing (based on the well-being of the populace centered on reproduction) sexuality in specific and limited ways facilitated the emergence of such a regulated populace while falling comfortably within the positivism that guided most theorizing during this period. Though this androcentric discourse and signifying economy have been at work philosophically for thousands of years, the addition of concrete/positive evidence of male superiority from the Enlightenment era (no doubt the finding of which was guided by the desire to find it) makes it unsurprising that the way in which sexuality and subsequently sex come to be deployed is again through a masculinist lens. Thus, the sexualized, sexed, and gendered body literally takes shape in the nineteenth-century socio-political sphere through this discourse, specifically in state institutions that emerge during this time period, e.g. compulsory education institutions.

Most significant to this development for our consideration of the ways in which dress codes function in schools are the internalization of sexuality and the subsequent connection between one's sexuality, sex, gender and personal identity/subjectivity that is forged by this discourse and the eroticization of certain parts of the body through the male heteronormative gaze. According to Butler's (2006) understanding of Foucault's work, "[t]o be sexed... is to be subjected to a set of social regulations, to have the law that directs those regulations reside both as the formative principle of one's sex, gender, pleasures, and desires and as the hermeneutic principle of self-interpretation" (130). Sexuality and sex become the language, the genesis of which is cleverly hidden within the discourse of scientific truth and naturalization, through which a person must interpret themselves and be interpreted by the law and the social body. Additionally, if we see the language of sexuality and sex as Irigaray did, a view which Butler supports, as representing a masculine signifying economy in which the "feminine" is rendered impossible and only a copy of the masculine, then sexuality works not only in the service of heterosexuality (in which homosexuality is seen as only a failed "copy" of an original heterosexuality), but also in the eroticization of body parts through that same masculine signifying economy and the prioritization of the male gaze in interpreting, desiring, regulating, disciplining, etc. *all bodies*. Not only, therefore, does the body take shape through the deployment and naturalization of sexuality and sex (and corresponding gender norms) as mentioned above, but also through compulsory and

corresponding desire of certain parts of the body (based on “natural” reproductive purposes and therefore sexual significance), which secures heteronormativity’s role in the policing of bodies.

With regard to the idea of policing or demanding certain proper, regulated performance by a subject filtered through the lenses of sexuality, sex, and gender, consideration of the concept of interpellation is crucial. In Althusser’s notion of interpellation, a policeman hails the subject who then turns in response; it is a policeman who initiates the call by which the subject becomes socially constituted. The police represent the law and, by initiating the call, binds the law to the subject it has hailed. This call is formative because it initiates the individual into the subjected status of the subject (Butler, 2011; 83). Heteropatriarchal norms of sexuality, sex, and gender compel the subject to act according to, to be defined by, those norms. Butler conceives of this call and response as a performance of sexuality, sex, and gender demanded in various ways, which creates the subject according to those norms and their ability to meet their standards in performance. Performativity, therefore, is not representative, rather productive of subjectivity. When dress codes continually specify, as I argue in chapter three that they do, the body parts of girls that must remain covered or the gang colors that are prohibited in order to maintain a distraction-free and safe learning environment, those body parts, colors, and other prohibited items *become* distracting and unsafe. Students carefully and sometimes painfully learn and internalize these messages about gender (it is the girl’s job to keep the boy from making sexual advances, wanted or unwanted), race (the kinds of clothing worn by students of color are dangerous and therefore people of

color are dangerous), and class (certain clothes are “classy” and certain clothes are “trashy”), as seen in their ability to perform the standards of the dress code. This performance then produces them as specific kinds of students and citizens.

It is no surprise that institutionalized sexuality and desire emerge simultaneously with intensified and more insidious policing of the body given the long-standing tradition in Western philosophy of not only separating mind from body, but subordinating body to mind. In the Cartesian tradition, which emerged during the Scientific Revolution, early Enlightenment, and expanded European worldwide colonization, subordinating body to mind served the purpose of securing “man” as the pinnacle of the animal kingdom as well as white European “man” as the most sophisticated and advanced in the world. Additionally, a pervasive gender hierarchy in which “cultural associations of mind with masculinity and body with femininity” (Butler, 2006; 17) accompanies this dualism, the subordination of body to mind, thus (re)producing patriarchal domination. If mind is considered superior to body, masculine is considered superior to feminine, the body is specifically and naturally eroticized, and (hetero)sexuality is successfully deployed then many separate but interrelated mechanisms of bodily discipline and regulation take shape and create a socio-political environment in which that regulation is produced and reproduced by institutions and individuals alike. If a person is to be considered eligible for participation in society, then they must be intelligible and viable through these systems of regulation in which “both marker and the marked are maintained within a masculinist mode of signification” (Butler, 2006; 17). The combination of eroticized

and non-eroticized bodily markers, binary division of sexuality, a masculinist signifying economy, and patriarchy result in a complex and specific matrix of intelligibility (Butler, 2006) through which a subject's performance is viewed and subsequently judged as proper or improper, intelligible or unintelligible.

Butler further asserts that "gender ontologies always operate within established political contexts as normative injunctions" (2006; 203), thus this matrix through which a subject becomes gendered (including self-perception, social perception, and body) helps maintain systems of regulation. Gender, therefore, is a political category, rather than a "natural" one and, if we follow Butler's aforementioned logic, sex works similarly, meaning that dress codes, despite rhetoric around safety, equality, creating a learning environment, etc. function for great political purposes. In theorizing about how both gender *and* sex *become* naturalized in order to conceal greater disciplinary mechanisms, by challenging ontology as "not a foundation, but a normative injunction that operates insidiously by installing itself into political discourse as its necessary ground" (Butler, 2006; 203), Butler reveals the ways in which any regulatory system focused solely on the body, such as dress codes, is a political mechanism working for greater social regulatory purposes.

Neoliberalism and the Politics of the Body: Amorality, Choice, and the Most Vulnerable Populations

In order to avoid generalities around social control and regulation, it is worth discussing at this point in my analysis the ways in which neoliberalism is helpful in critiquing systems of regulation as they have emerged in the last half century. Schools,

as mentioned above and as I elaborate upon in the coming pages, are microcosms of social and political trends in any culture and dress codes in particular reflect the widespread, subtle, and deeply ingrained facets of neoliberalism in the United States and in turn facilitate and internalization of those facets into the subjectivity and worldview of each student. According to Dean Spade (Duggan et al, 2012/2013), the term neoliberalism helps bring different systems together that seem to work separately in order to critique larger systems of inequality and oppression, for example immigration and the prison system. Sealing Cheng (2012/2013) illustrates the complexities of such a system by explaining neoliberalism as encompassing three sets of paradoxes: amorality versus morality, the depoliticization of social risk versus the hyperpoliticization of national security, and the ravaging of vulnerable populations while upholding humanitarianism and volunteerism as ways of alleviating suffering. Overall, within neoliberalism as it is useful in this discussion of dress codes, I see a central tension within all of these paradoxes between a celebration of individual reason and decision making – as well as the celebration of success or faulting for failure that accompanies those decisions – and the imperative to consider the well-being of the whole, particularly with regard to flows of capital and nationalism. This also connects to my later discussion of the ways in which Foucault theorizes that discipline functions in modern society and the process of norming bodies as well as the resulting performativity and emerging subjectivity.

Elizabeth Bernstein (Cheng et al, 2012/2013) explains the paradox of amorality through her analysis of the treatment of sex workers. These sex workers are imprisoned

for their crimes, per the legal system as it is laid out currently, during which time they are said to be rehabilitated into “proper” ways of functioning in society. These “proper ways” include participating in the capitalist system through consumerism and abiding by heteronormative, Judeo-Christian expectations of gender and sexuality. Thus, according to Bernstein, “freedom” does not mean the freedom to do whatever one wants to, rather freedom takes place/is exercised under certain restraints, which, rather than illustrating amorality, actually introduces a *conservative* set of morals into the legal system. (These morals, furthermore, are based on much of the essentialist understanding of the naturalized body that Butler deconstructs in her work as I have explained above.) Bernstein gives another example in her article, “ Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns,” (2010) in which she uses two films, *Call and Response* and *Very Young Girls*, as the launching pad for her analysis of the emergence of the unlikely coalition between liberal feminists and evangelical Christians that seeks to eradicate sex trafficking. Bernstein asserts that the social justice model that enables these two groups to come together on this issues sits at the intersection of intense focus on incarceration, consumer values, and militant humanitarianism, all of which advocates for an increase in the ability of the state to enact violence on already-marginalized populations in the name of protecting the rights and citizenship of some. In other words, this coalition makes use of “neoliberal consumer politics and a militarized state apparatus that utilizes claims of a particular white, middle-class model of Western gender and sexual superiority in achieving its goals” (Bernstein, 2010; 66).

These sex workers are “saved” by humanitarian organizations by learning crafts, which enables them to enter into the global marketplace by selling their goods and therefore become more “free.” This “freedom” of course is again under certain restraints: women should only make money through the above-ground marketplace in which they fall in line with proper gender roles and expectations of sexuality.

Dress codes contain similar paradoxes of amorality, particularly through the notion of *equality* within codes: all students must abide by all of the same regulations on length, color, tightness, etc. While the concept of equality claims to remove judgment from such a policy (and therefore give the student more “freedom”), the cultural values that guide the policies put in place by which everyone must abide insert a certain restraint – to use Bernstein’s phrasing – under which equality actually operates and through which certain bodies experience said equality. I recently witnessed a debate centered on tightness, particularly with regard to yoga pants, and while this debate did not explicitly mention varying body types, socioeconomic status, and/or race, these facets of the ways in which bodies experience the world and how people interpret bodies were implicit in a conversation about body type and clothing style. When pants are too tight, it seemed to participants in this conversation, they lose their opacity and regulations prohibiting visible underwear or the outline of underwear are transgressed. Additionally, the outline of a student’s buttocks became too defined and the fact that she/he might have buttocks became too obvious, a problem because buttocks are sexualized culturally and through the dress code (which of course produces the performance that again produces them as sexual). If one did not have the

body type to fit into yoga pants “properly” – i.e. without too distinct an outline of the buttocks or too visible an underwear line – or the financial means to purchase “high-quality” brands, they did not deserve to wear them. This discourse takes place outside school walls as well, as demonstrated recent comments by Chip Wilson, chairperson and co-founder of the wildly popular and expensive fitness clothing brand Lululemon, that “[f]rankly some women’s bodies just don’t work for [Lululemon’s yoga pants]” (2014, December 10; “Chip Wilson Resigning...”). Furthermore, categorizing dress codes according to girls’ and boys’ specific clothing (brands and/or styles) inserts gender expectations founded on conservative and limited heteronormative definitions of gender expression as well as class signifiers and confers the commodification of bodies.

The second paradox of neoliberalism that Cheng describes, the depoliticization of social risk and the hyperpoliticization of national security, points to the high value that reason and rationality have in the West, particularly in the United States. This paradox is centered on the belief that all people possess an innate ability to reason and are therefore responsible for the consequences of the decisions they make in life, whether that means reaping the rewards of success or taking responsibility for failure. This part of this paradox erases material reality from consideration, assumes that the split between mind and matter is clean and absolute, and assumes that all people are in the same position to make decisions, regardless of race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc. Juxtaposing a heightened concern for national security with this decision-making philosophy underlines the tension that though individuals are left to fend for

themselves with regard to the decisions that everyone supposedly makes under “equal” circumstances with the fact that all citizens should have the well-being/security of the nation as a whole at the top of their priority list. Sandra K. Soto (Cheng et al, 2012/2013) illustrates this paradox through an analysis of the Arizona immigration law, SB 1070, which strengthens and goes beyond federal immigration laws. This law posits that individuals “choose” to come to the United States without going through the proper legal process and must be held responsible for their choice to break the law. The law’s wording reflects a belief on the part of law makers that this creates a stronger America and that it is the duty of a citizen to follow and enforce this law. The law does not consider, however, the varying and often desperate material realities under which individuals make the decision to enter the United States and instead holds everyone to the same (equal) standard and the same (equal) consequences. In addition, the wording referring to the duties of the citizen to enforce the law heightens the feeling of surveillance both from outside and within communities.

Dress codes reflect a similar paradoxical logic, which connects to the previous paradox of supposed amorality. It is assumed by school administrators, teachers, and others who enforce the dress code that all students make conscious decisions about dress under equal circumstances and with equal understanding of the dress code and its wording. An impoverished student who only has one pair of shorts to wear to school may be seen as a behavioral problem when she continues to wear the shorts to school despite repeated warnings that those shorts are not in compliance with the dress code.

Eventually, she may be sent home without the opportunity to return to school until she has access to proper clothing. This punishment serves as a reminder of the assumption that all students make decisions under the same material circumstances as well as a public display of bodily discipline. This public display is particularly important for the enforcement of the regulation of this unruly body, a concept I elaborate on later in this chapter.

Additionally, many dress codes use phrasing around “distraction” and consideration of the good of all students and their role as learners when at school. By placing students’ ability to learn as the responsibility for the bodies in the school – as in, the way they are clothed in order to not distract from the learning taking place in schools – this phrasing, just as the phrasing in Arizona SB 1070 does, creates a system of surveillance. Students watch each other, looking for the distraction that the dress code asserts that bodies can and will bring into school. Students watch themselves, attempting to eliminate, depending on their ability to do so, the distraction that the dress code asserts that bodies can and will bring into school. Here we can see Butler’s (2006) idea of performativity at work: the dress code claims that something is distracting, thus creating that distracting subjectivity by naming it as such (hailing it as Althusser describes it). Additionally, students norm their performance of gender and sexuality according to the terms of the dress code, thus producing them as gendered and sexual subjects through those terms and guidelines.

The final paradox of neoliberalism elucidated by Cheng is the ravaging of vulnerable populations with an upward flow of capital while simultaneously

upholding the virtue and necessity of humanitarianism and volunteer aid as means of solving poverty and other forms of oppression or disadvantage. *Precious Knowledge* (2011), a film about the ethnic studies program in Tucson Arizona, illustrates the ways in which a neoliberal system restricts or entirely denies access to cultural knowledge in favor of privileging the individual, per the second paradox mentioned above. This enables a prioritization of individual decision-making, the ability to place blame on populations for whom economic, political, and social systems are not set up to work, and to focus on volunteerism to solve the problems without focusing on the structural issues that create the inequality in the first place. This allows neoliberal values and structures to remain in place disguised by community volunteer and humanitarian efforts to “help” alleviate oppression.

This paradox applies to dress codes as well, but perhaps in a more indirect way. To begin, as illustrated above through my discussion of the long history of Western philosophy about the body, sex, and gender as well as Judith Butler’s (2006) matrix of intelligibility, bodies and therefore dress codes are conceived of through a white heteronormative lens, basing values and bodily meaning on that lens and interpretation of the world. Thus, “body capital” flows upward, to the already-privileged white male. One must always either attempt to be that white, male, heteronormative body or to perform appropriately for the gaze of the white, male, heteronormative (though that performance is always fraught with the impossible-to-negotiate properly tensions between “slut” and “prude”). Additionally, reliance on scientific categorizations of “sex” and “gender” as absolute truths in creating and enforcing dress codes maintains

structures of inequity and oppression that impact non-male, non-white, non-middle class, non-heteronormative populations most heavily. These structures are further disguised by claims that dress codes protect the safety of students (an impossible assumption that places the authors of the dress code outside the very discourse they claim to control and emphasizes the neoliberal claim to amorality), help them learn more with fewer distractions, and teach students “self-respect” and how to dress for success (presumably participation in the neoliberal marketplace and global flows of capital) later in life. These equivalents of humanitarian outreach make it seem as though dress codes are for the good of the individual and the good of the whole, all the while disguising positivist discourse at work in regulating bodily intelligibility and funneling bodily worth and truth toward the white, male, heteronormative body.

The element of neoliberalism that links these three paradoxes together and which has a great impact on dress codes and consideration of any possible resistance to dress codes (which I address in chapter four of this project) is the tension between individual and collective. Rooted in the discourse of the Scientific Revolution and having matured in the period of the Industrial Revolution and urbanization, it is no surprise that nineteenth century liberalism (the ancestor to twentieth and twenty-first century *neoliberalism*) based political, economic, and social success on the decisions made by the individual. This period and all the scientific and industrial innovations that came with it celebrated man’s superiority in the animal kingdom, limitless ability, and inevitable progress – all based on the miraculous and unique ability of man to “reason.” This combination also made it easier for emerging and maturing democracies

at the time to justify lack of social support systems while simultaneously, in the pre-World War 1 explosion of nationalism, demanding allegiance to the needs of the greater good. Such emphases exist in the twenty-first century: demands for people to be accountable for their own decisions, assuming that everyone makes decisions under the same material circumstance (or an absolute denial that material circumstances have any impact on a person's decisions), and obligation to consider the "greater good."

Discipline, Surveillance, and Biopolitics: Foucault's Discourse of the Modern Body

Dress codes take root in neoliberal values and assumptions through creating "equal" standards by which all student bodies (and here I mean individual bodies) must abide regardless of material reality and by claiming the ability to make such demands through concern for the safety and productive learning environment for the entire student body (here I mean the collective of students within a given school community rather than the corporeal form of any given student). Institutionalized and government-funded compulsory education arose at the same time as nineteenth-century liberalism and nationalism, meant to create as well-informed a populace as possible in order to facilitate more thoughtful (or perhaps to specifically guide think thinking necessary for) participation in the ever-widening franchise and to enable people to live more easily with one another as cities sprouted and grew in the years prior to and immediately following the First World War. Combining (neo)liberal values and training for citizenship, schools were and are natural places for surveillance and discipline of the individual (body), all under the guise of the well-being of the whole. Additionally, the rise of state-sponsored compulsory education coincides with the production of whiteness (and race in general as

we now know it) in the wider sociopolitical tapestry of nineteenth century in the United States through positivist racial theorizing as well as dramatic legal changes, such as those that accompany the Civil War. It is here, in considering the ways in which Butler analyzes the construction and interpretation of bodies combined with a critique of neoliberalism, that a consideration of Foucault's analyses of the modern legal and carceral systems as well as the workings of power and discipline are most fruitful.

Before discussing Foucault's ideas on the legal and carceral systems specifically, it is important to understand two central terms/concepts that Foucault uses and how they are relevant to my analysis of dress codes: power and discourse.

Foucault views power not as a tangible "thing" which someone can possess, rather as relation taking place in a specific time and place. Furthermore, for Foucault, power can work in multiple ways per any relation; power can be oppressive or productive depending on the relation through which it acquires meaning. (I explore the productive nature of power for resistance in my fourth chapter.) Additionally, for Foucault power is always present at every level of society making it impossible for any person or moment to claim existence outside of power relations. For dress codes and in similar fashion to the neoliberal paradox of amorality, this way of conceptualizing power helps analyze the various and varying relations at work in composing, enforcing, and resisting bodily regulation through dress. The second concept to understand is discourse, which for this project is most helpful to consider not just as a conversation or an exchange of ideas through speaking or writing, but as a crucial component – along with language – of what produces human beings as subjects. It is through

discourse that ideas take shape, thoughts are communicated, and power relations take place. For the purpose of analyzing dress codes, I have thus far taken the stance, with the support of Butler's reasoning and deconstruction of essentialized bodies, that bodies are discursively produced (and are not natural or original) and continue to analyze this through power relations and systems of discipline and social control.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995) explores the evolution of Western legal systems from the medieval to modern periods and examines their functions specifically through the resulting systems of punishment, most notably the prison system. Since the institutions of compulsory, government-sponsored schooling coincides with this shift and is meant in large part to facilitate responsible citizenship in an increasingly industrialized and urban environment and in which the franchise continued to expand, schools are a natural place to explore the wide-ranging impact of this shift. Of extra interest and importance to this project are the ways in which Foucault analyzes the role and disciplining of the body in the social contract, the construction of the "delinquent," and the maintenance and perpetuation of legal and carceral systems through those processes. Finally, in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault discusses Jeremy Bentham's panopticism, which bears striking resemblances to the ways in which students experience surveillance in schools, especially with regard to bodily regulation and punishment through dress codes.

The first element of Foucault's analysis of law, crime, punishment and imprisonment that is applicable to my analysis of secondary school dress codes is his examination of the shift in Western legal systems from sovereign-controlled public

judgment, punishment, torture, and execution to the emergence of democratic societies with written legal codes, bureaucratically administered and maintained, and private (both in terms of visibility and guidance by capitalist values of privatization) processes of judgment and punishment. Along with this analysis, Foucault provides a history of the body and its political economy, stating that “it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination” and that “the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body” (Foucault, 1995; 26). This makes sense for the period in which this shift in legal systems takes place as it is during the emergence and height of the Industrial Revolution in which physical labor was crucial to the continued flow of capital and financial success of the emerging industrial middle class. The law undergoes important shifts in the nineteenth century as does the way in which the body is implicated in legal processes, but the body’s central involvement in juridical systems remains constant. Additionally, it is important to note the epistemological context within which this shift takes place: demand for positivist truths guided by the persistence of Enlightenment-era assertions about a knowable universe necessitated “truths” about bodies. Thus, infinite pathological possibilities emerged for bodies; from categories of sex (the naturalization of which I discuss previously in this chapter) to categories of racial superiority to claims of illnesses, both mental and physical. Therefore, rather than being pre-existing and naturally true, “the knowable/known body” of the nineteenth century emerges from within a context of industrial expansion, shifting juridical power, and scientific “discovery.”

The same is true for the student body. First, we can see similar investment in the body in dress code wording around creating a positive/productive/distraction-free/etc. learning environment as well as the fact that this wording is located *within* a code of conduct – the legal lens through which the student body is constructed and brought into existence in the school community. Additionally, dress codes, as expressed in my analysis and application of Judith Butler’s theories earlier in this chapter, rely on naturalized definitions of sex and – even if, for example, interpretation of certain dress codes acknowledges the constructed nature of gender – operate on established “truths” about bodies. Given that no knowledge exists outside power relations or is pre-existing, the knowledge about bodies on which authors and enforcers of dress codes rely, the way in which bodies are demanded to be productive, and the sheer existence of a dress code illustrate Foucault’s (1995) ideas about the necessity of a “productive body and a subjected body” (26). Additionally, Foucault asserts this history of the body in legal, economic, and social terms should cause concern for what he terms the “body politic” (28). This “set of material elements and techniques that serves as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge” (28) make this project of understanding, deconstructing and resisting dress codes in schools a crucial one.

Accompanying this analysis of the history of the body in modern legal systems is an analysis of the genealogy of the soul. Humanist obsession with man’s ability to reason and the inevitable positive progress that accompanies it enabled Western

philosophers to naturalize the soul, particularly within Christian theology. Making use of concepts like “original sin,” it is easy to justify legal systems and accompanying systems of punishment based on the fact that humans are born into sin and therefore subject to punishment with the effective caveat of the possibility of redemption through that punishment. Thus, the student body (and, based on aims for students’ eventual proper performance of citizenship, the body in general), assumed always-already disobedient or unruly, requires rules and regulations as guidelines for the student soul to properly conform their body. The punishment for breaking dress code rules presumably redeems the student body by helping the student soul manage their body to fall *more* (though not ever completely) in line with the white, middle-class, heteronormative, male lens through which the code was written in the first place. Foucault (1995) would assert, however, that the soul “is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision, and constraint” (29). Thus, the student’s soul and, for my purpose in this project, the student’s subjectivity, emerge through the dress code rather than any prior-existing sense of self being “reformed” by these codes.

It is especially effective to discipline the body this way when the standard body is the white, middle class, professional, heteronormative male body, a standard that is impossible to completely attain for most bodies. This impossibility illustrates the effectiveness of the process of what Butler considered to be norming or attempting to properly perform to expectations. This performance, as I have previously discussed, actually produces the subject according to those expectations, while always falling

somewhat short, demanding constant attention to the standards and attempting to reach them. For Foucault, this process represents the workings of discipline. Discipline is a type of power, a technology of power that works through specialized instruments, institutions (Foucault, 1995; 215), and authorities and is constantly (re)generated as people within any given system of laws (from being citizens of a municipality to students within a school) judge themselves, each other, and are subjected to the processes of the legal and prison system. As a mechanism of power, discipline works similarly: relationally and constantly. Discipline in the modern age is not top-down, but more ubiquitous and, in the case of bodily discipline according to codes of dress in secondary schools, more insidiously.

An important part of Foucault's analysis of the change in legal systems and systems of punishment is the public-to-private shift. Mainstream historical discourse around this shift unsurprisingly maintains this moment as a moment of positive progress, given that the most obvious change is the elimination of physical torture and gruesome executions. For Foucault, however, when punishment shifts from public to private, "justice no longer takes public responsibility for the violence that is bound up with its practice" (Foucault, 1995; p. 9). Holding this to be true, it would seem that law, justice, punishment, and discipline are always violent, yet the modern legal and penal systems have found ways to shift responsibility for this violence onto the body of the criminal and therefore have "permission" to construct a system in which the criminal's punishment and "redemption" take place in private. This connects directly to the paradox of morality located within neoliberalism mentioned previously. When the fault

lies solely with the perpetrator, then the consequence lies solely with that person as well, yet it is their social responsibility to accept the (violent) consequences of their action given their own (supposedly voluntary) entrance into the greater social contract.

Eighteenth-century philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau theorized about this social contract, explaining the concept of freedom-with-restraint mentioned previously (Bernstein in Cheng et al, 2012/2013) as an obligation to the general will of the whole in order to preserve the well-being and freedom of the individual. If “the least crime attacks the whole of society” then “the right to punish [shifts] from the vengeance of the sovereign to the defence of society” (Foucault, 1995; 90). What law and punishment cannot be justified through this line of thinking? In making the administration of law and punishment of crimes a private occurrence, punishment shifts “[f]rom being an art of unbearable sensations... [to] an economy of suspended rights” (11) – once again the neoliberal freedom-with-restraint – disseminated throughout the entire social body. Thus, “a whole army of technicians [takes] over from the executioner, the immediate anatomist of pain” (11) to maintain social order through the concept of discipline illustrated above. Schools are part of this army responsible for molding proper citizens as well as punishing them and it would seem, given the analysis of the significance of the body in legal and punitive systems above, that dress codes are decorated officers in this army. Additionally, through means discussed later in this chapter, every member of the school community – students included – becomes part of the “army of technicians” helping maintain proper bodily management and performance throughout the schooling experience and into adulthood.

As illustrated in the genealogy of the body and the soul in Western society, subjectivity, for Foucault, emerges discursively. In terms of thinking about shifts in legal and penal systems, the law functions to create a “juridical subject” (Foucault, 1995; 13) through a process that connects to Judith Butler’s (2006) performativity and Althusser’s notion of interpellation discussed previously in this chapter. Interpellation is an act where the power and force of the law compels fear at the same time it offers recognition at an expense. The subject not only receives recognition, but also attains a certain social existence by being brought from a realm of impossibility into the discursive and social domain of a subject. Prisons function to “apply the law not so much to a real body capable of feeling pain as to [that] juridical subject” (Foucault, 1995; 13). When Foucault also mentions that “the ‘crimes’ and ‘offences’ on which judgement is passed are juridical objects defined by the code, but [that] judgement is also passed on the passions, instincts, anomalies, infirmities, maladjustments, effects of environment or heredity” and asserts that “it is [the] shadows lurking behind the case itself that are judged and punished” (Foucault, 1995; 17) we can clearly see the genealogy of the body and soul in the discursive production of the modern juridical subject. Additionally, this logic illustrates the Enlightenment- era proclivity for pathologizing the juridical subject’s actions and the ways in which that creates a system of discipline that perpetuates “criminal” status and clearly draws lines between desirable and undesirable subjects.

Part of what the creation of this juridical subject and the pathologies that accompany it do is disseminate throughout society the aforementioned force of

discipline and make full use of the position of judge. These judges, from Supreme Court Justices to school administrators, who establish truth: the truth about a crime in relation to the rule violated as well as the truth about the perpetrator's soul. Thusly works the modern juridical system to establish, to construct, a stringently controlled populace who become such through their relationship to the law. Whether "not-guilty" through their ability to abide by the law (or at least avoid detection) or "guilty" through their inability to abide by the law, the law determines the parameters of the subject's existence. This judgment according to the law works in tandem with the force of discipline and performativity that flows throughout the populace. What makes this combination most insidious, however, and what illustrates the paradoxes inherent in neoliberalism mentioned above, is the assumption that all juridical subjects possess the same ability to interpret the law, see how they relate to it, and to perform it properly through the choices they make (which determine subsequent actions) within that system regardless of material reality (often guided by or determined by factors like race, gender, socioeconomic status, physical ability, religious beliefs, etc.).

In tandem with the ways in which Butler posits the body comes to be discursively constructed, the creation of the juridical subject and the accompanying judgment of that subject's body and soul represent the corporeality and process of emerging subjectivity inherent in students' negotiation of dress codes in secondary schools. The nineteenth-century school, guided by the demands for a productive workforce and docile citizens, that most schools still resemble in many ways relied on the notion that knowledge was fixed and ought to be given from one expert (the teacher)

to waiting vessels (the students). Adding to this modernist epistemological stance were and are the long-standing notions of the separation of mind and body and the naturalized (and gendered and racialized) body as discussed previously in this chapter. If the discourse around student bodies in this context could fix the body in this matrix – as known, natural, original, subservient to the mind – then both the act of learning and the citizen-student could also become fixed, docile, and disciplined. In other words, the known/knowable and categorized body of a disciplined subject is crucial to the project of learning in the neoliberal landscape.

This known/knowable student is required to abide by a dress code and, in the case that they do not or cannot, are formally “called-out” by and punished through dress codes (known in my experiences as “being dress coded”) making them always-already guilty. Students are always-already “dress coded” in bodily and emotional senses by the impossible standard that dress codes set up. The possibility for resistance seems non-existent, though it is perhaps simply hidden by the same processes that hide the genealogy of the sexed body through the naturalization of anatomy and the prioritization of maleness, a notion that I explore further in my fourth chapter. One of the forces disguising openings for resistance to code of dress is the demand for immediate confession, which additionally illustrates not only the seemingly absolute power of the teacher/administrator sanctioned through demands for proper citizenship and the white, middle class, professional, heteronormative model on which the idea of “proper dress” is built, but also the function of “dress coding” as serving to illustrate the disciplining capacity of the law itself as well as the

status of the student as subject only viable through and within the discourse of that very law. Furthermore, the act of dress coding by the teacher, the subsequent confession by the student, and the act of reform as dictated by administrative policy (from changing clothes to detention to suspension from school) work together to produce specific subjectivities through varying student bodies.

Foucault refers to the ways in which a person's life beyond any legal infraction comes to define them and the juridical subject that emerges through that process as the emergence of the delinquent (Foucault, 1995; 251). Foucault argues that this process dictates the delinquent be pathologized according to medical diagnoses of the day so that the penal system can rehabilitate him and (re)make him into a productive citizen. Two problems arise with this supposed system of rehabilitation: it naturalizes "the 'criminal' as existing before the crime and even outside of it" (Foucault, 1995; 252), which leads to the second problem that the criminal is never necessarily supposed to be fully rehabilitated into productive life because it is much more profitable (in terms of social control and capital) for judicial and penal systems to perpetuate delinquency and criminality. Similarly with dress codes, there is nothing a student can do to change their body, yet the demands of whiteness, maleness, and middle-class status remain in the dress code. Thus, a student has two options, both of which continuously circulate the disciplining mechanisms of the dress code: change their dress to best approximate the standards of the code in place or reject the code and continue to dress in ways that

fall outside the parameters of the dress code. Regardless, the primacy of the dress code and the superiority of the standards it promotes remain and guide any individual's behavior.

The student who changes their dress in an attempt to meet the standards of the dress code openly accepts the terms of that code, the motivations for which can be complex. Perhaps the student is "at-risk" (a loathsome term, but one nonetheless widely used by school systems and other youth-support institutions) and therefore cannot push that discipline generates around them any more than their at-risk status already does for fear of being removed from the educational system entirely and losing whatever opportunities come with completing a secondary-level education. Perhaps the student genuinely believes the rhetoric of "self-respect," "preparation for the professional world," and/or "creating a safe learning environment" included in many dress codes' language. Regardless of those motivations, the disciplinary discourse generated through the language and symbolism of dress codes produces these as-obedient-as-possible though still- not-quite-proper student bodies. Additionally, the subjectivities produced through the efforts at approximating the standards of the dress code include a tacit acceptance that the student's body and the student themselves is inherently "bad" and needing (through accepting) the correction that comes through the standards of the dress code.

The student who rejects the imperative to abide by the standards of any given dress code also reproduces the notion of the "bad" student body that needs correction through the dress code. Because that student is subject to punishment, varying in

severity based on school policy as well as the degree to which the student's body departs from the standards set in the dress code, they become the delinquent subject within that community, a student suffering from some pathologized deviancy. Unfortunately for the student, the institution of schooling includes a system by which student difference (in this case deviance) is defined by officials, a process through which, once again, the student becomes a viable subject (only) through the definitions given by the law that comes from administrators and other educational experts. The officially defined difference through which the student comes into being, this deviancy, marks the student as delinquent within the community, which further reinforces the norms and standards of the dress codes while simultaneously initiating and perpetuating an additionally disciplinary technology: surveillance.

A particular mode of surveillance discipline that Foucault discusses that seems particularly relevant to a discussion of secondary schools is Jeremy Bentham's panopticism. Basically, the panopticon is a prison design which enables a single viewer, from the vantage point of a central tower that is encircled by prisoner cells open for viewing, to constantly monitor the prisoners. Both the gaze of the single viewer in the tower and the *potential* gaze of that viewer keep prisoners from misbehaving under the threat and perceived reality of constant surveillance and imminent punishment. The ways in which schools use and enforce dress codes combines the notions of discipline, bio-power, the "numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault, 1990; 140) that emerged in the nineteenth century

accompanying the deployment of sexuality, and panoptic surveillance of and by students. Clearly, teachers and administrators carefully survey student bodies and discipline those not in compliance with stated standards, but the ways in which notions of delinquency (known through the code itself as well as those students publicly disciplined for their deviance from the standards of dress) and its consequences circulate through students result in student self-surveillance. The idea of delinquency acts much like the single viewer in the central tower constantly circulating among students threatening exposure for any bodily infraction. The ways in which students survey and discipline themselves and each other represent the way in which “we bring [the panoptic machine] to ourselves since we are part of its mechanism” (Foucault, 1995; 217). In fact, this self-surveillance (on both individual and collective levels) is such the effective result of panopticism that “the vigilance of intersecting gazes... soon [renders] useless both the eagle and the sun” (Foucault, 1995; 217).

This is not to say that teachers and administrators do not have to keep track of dress code infractions, but that the mechanisms of discipline, bio-power, and surveillance becomes so effectively embedded in student subjectivity and interpersonal relationships that they do their own monitoring and punishing. Additionally, dress codes reflect, both indirectly and directly, popular trends in personal style including clothing, hair, and accessories. I recall my elementary school banning slap bracelets, popular among pre-teens in the late 1980s, because they were a safety hazard (I assume also because they were terribly irritating to teachers). Because school dress codes,

based on respectability, employability, distractability, and safety, so closely align with popular trends, we can see them as the very intersection of the central observation tower in Bentham's panopticon and the collective and individual self-surveillance of the given population. Thus the mechanism of dress codes – disciplinary, subjective, surveying – are far-reaching in their impacts on individual identity, interpersonal relationships, and defining difference in schools.

Creating and Directing Student Subjectivities: Dress Codes as Orientations

Because school is the only means through which citizens are told they can achieve success in a capitalist system (with the exception of some Hollywood stars or sports stars), staying in school becomes top priority. Students can only “stay in school” if they achieve subject status through the mechanisms of the school, one of which is the dress code. Sara Ahmed (2006) in her *Queer Phenomenology* examines the idea of orientation, particularly sexual orientation, and ways in which our orientation in particular directions dictates our desires based on what comes into view through that orientation. Ahmed uses literal physical orientation and what comes into view as a metaphor for the development of specific subjectivities based on that orientation. Because “[t]he body acts upon what is nearby or at hand, and then gets shaped by its directions toward such objects, which keeps other objects beyond the bodily horizon” (Ahmed, 2006; 91), it is, by virtue of being able to (be) face(d) one way or another, produced by its surroundings.

Considering the ways in which the student body and subjectivity, and the desires and world view that manifest through that subjectivity, emerge through dress codes

allows us to consider dress codes as orientations meant to produce specific kinds of students. Dress codes that forbid boys from wearing skirts, for example, orient students toward a specific definition of masculinity, which, depending on other school practices, could also orient students towards a specific way of relating to each other with regard to sexuality. Dress codes that focus most of their regulations on the ways in which girls dress justify pervasive heteronormative cultural thought-processes (often in connection with rape culture) that place the responsibility for boys' actions on the bodies of girls. Crucially, based on the ways (illustrated previously in this chapter) in which schools and school dress codes align with the goals and values of neoliberalism in producing a specific student-citizen prepared for participation in the marketplace and reproduction in order to contribute to the workforce, dress codes tend to work in the service of that neoliberal orientation. These orientations encompass naturalized bodies, performativity, the matrix of intelligibility, subjectivity, discipline, delinquency, and surveillance in the project of "straightening" students according to neoliberal standards and needs.

In my third chapter I examine specifically dress codes from schools around Guilford County, North Carolina, both public schools (part of Guilford County Schools or GCS) and secular independent schools in order to specify exactly what subjectivities these dress codes aim to create and the ways in which regulations impact different students. This of course is guided to some extent by the values of the region of the country (the south tending to be more conservative or traditional), the class and racial divisions within Guilford County and the City of Greensboro and the resulting the racial and class composition of each school (this is especially important given that each school

in Guilford County has its own specific dress code regulations in addition to the general guidelines written in the GCS Student Handbook), and relationships (both formal and informal) that GCS and the independent schools may have with local, regional, or national businesses or universities, but ought to align with the theories outlined in this chapter regarding naturalized sexuality, sex, and gender, performativity and discipline, the mechanisms and tensions of neoliberalism, and the overall role of the body in creating and managing a populace.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have examined the ideas of Butler, Foucault, and Ahmed as well as the tensions and paradoxes within the guiding political, economic, and social forces of neoliberalism. The main thrust of this chapter is to argue that the body, while it does exist as a “thing” (Grosz, 1994; p. xi), is culturally designated as sexual, sexed, gendered, racialized, and classed and those designations help to classify certain, if not most, bodies as excessive and unruly and therefore deserving of discipline and punishment. In both popular culture and secondary school dress codes, not just any body “will do” (Bordo, 1993), but, based on Butler’s examination of longstanding and deeply entrenched Western philosophizing about the body, all bodies must “do” – as best as possible – whiteness, maleness, and heteronormativity. This imperative is a useful mechanism of general social discipline as student bodies receive messages directly through the wording of dress codes about how they should appear and perform, yet also how they should not appear and perform. This results in

the performance of the proper body as defined by the boundaries of the improper body, both of which construct the system of symbols through which the body relates to the world.

As I examine more closely in chapters three and four of this project, this system of symbols has become so deeply engrained in students' and adults' minds that it seems common sense and simply disrespectful to oneself and others to dress in a way that is overtly sexual, unapologetically ethnic, or not in correspondence with traditional gender expectations. There is clearly a lot at stake in having a body at school and dress codes illuminate precisely just how high those stakes are, especially for non-male, non-white, non-middle-class, non-professional, and/or non-heteronormative bodies. In the coming chapter, I use dress codes from Guilford County Schools to point out exactly what grounds those high stakes are built upon and point out the ways in which bodies are constructed and disciplined through those regulations.

CHAPTER III

THE BODY YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO HAVE: WHAT DRESS CODES DEMAND, SEE, AND DISCIPLINE

A student will maintain personal attire and grooming standards that promote safety, health, and acceptable standards of social conduct, and are not disruptive to the educational environment. (Guilford County Schools Student Handbook, 2013)

The only thing that separates us from the animals is our ability to accessorize. (Steel Magnolias, 1989)

I was standing with a group of friends in the main hallway near the cafeteria after lunch when it happened. The dean of girls (her official title) briskly walked toward our group on her way to the door between buildings and, being a well-behaved and rarely “in-trouble” group of students, we smiled and greeted her without hesitation. I knew her fairly well – my older sister manages a genetic disease that resulted in many absences during her time in high school so my family had made special arrangements through the school that necessitated many phone calls, meetings, and support networks, all coordinated through the dean of girls’ office. I thought this encounter would be no different from the many pleasant ones we had enjoyed previously. As she neared our group, however, I saw her eyes linger on me for a split second, hardly recognizable to most in the group, but I sensed something was wrong. Her smile never faded, not even in the moment she delivered her famous line, “Ms. Drewicz, I will see you in my office

at 7am tomorrow.” For my peer group, that was the line she said to “bad kids:” the ones caught smoking on campus, skipping class, using foul language in the hallways, etc., not us. But it was true: I had earned a detention. Genuinely confused and experiencing the physical symptoms of panic at the idea of the tarnishing of my reputation as a “good student” I blurted out “But why?” The dean stopped and, in front of the entire group of girls and boys and without any dimming of her smile, replied “Because those shorts are too short.” She then turned on her heel and walked away.

As I explore in this chapter, this official consequence was comparatively mild at the most: it did not result in any lost class time nor did my parents even really need to be involved. Because I was fortunate to have my own car to drive and had spent years earning my parents trust, I could easily tell them I had an appointment with a teacher or was meeting my close friend for breakfast so that my leaving for school one hour early was not suspicious. As the panic welled in my body – my mind raced, my face reddened noticeably, sweat beaded on my forehead, my heartbeat raced so quickly it drowned out my friends obligatory exclamations of “that’s so unfair” and “she’s so mean” – I realized that what was worse in that moment than the detention I had just received was *my body*. The dean provided no context for her vituperation and, as a result, a most hurtful, confusing, and long-lasting message was received: my body was/is *wrong*. I did not know precisely why my body was the problem in that moment, but I wanted to run away from my body, toss it aside in favor of the right one, the one that would not be surveyed, pronounced as “wrong,” and then disciplined in front of my friends. Of course, this is not possible, but I felt so betrayed by my body that I almost

felt I could will this into possibility. Though this was not the first time I was aware of my body being not-quite right (for example, my second-grade best friend Kim asked me why I had extra skin on my sides when she first saw me in my bathing suit at the neighborhood pool), this was a moment in which many parts of my corporeality violently intersected and I understood the complexity of my position within the social fabric of this institution (though I could not have named it as such at the time).

When this incident occurred, I was wearing the same Abercrombie & Fitch drawstring cargo shorts that “everyone else” wore, but those girls were not in trouble. I had begged my mother to purchase those shorts for me for weeks; she was not keen on spending so much on shorts that were “pre-distressed” (“torn,” in her admittedly more accurate description) but eventually she relented as she understood the social pressure I was under. Many, if not all, teens experience a pressure to “fit in” by wearing the *right* clothes, listening to the *right* music, hanging out at the *right* places, and so on. I was under some extra pressure as I attended an elite and expensive independent school and, though my parents had the money to send me to this school, I was often left out socially since we did not have a beach house at Sea Island, I did not receive a brand new BMW/Mercedes/Audi/etc. on my sixteenth birthday, nor did I live in the exclusive neighborhoods around my school, but had to travel twenty-five minutes to school each day from the other side of Atlanta. I am white and experienced (and still experience) a considerable amount of privilege through my whiteness as well as many other facets of my identity including my home life, religious affiliation, innate intelligence (bolstered of course by many other

of my privileges), yet in the moment when the dean stopped to discipline publicly my body, I knew that the attempt I had made to approximate the ideal student at my high school had fallen short. During detention the next morning, I was expected to meditate on exactly how I could work harder to make my body fit into the mold of the ideal student, to shape myself into the docile student body, in order to both legitimize my place at such a fine institution as well as to legitimize the power and superiority of that ideal student body and perpetuate the cycle.

I genuinely do not think that the dean of girls at my high school knew the ways in which that moment affected me, nor the complex ways in which she disciplined and shaped my subject- status in that moment. That is why writing about dress codes in specific terms is critical. In this chapter I illustrate the ways in which dress codes construct that ideal, docile student body around parameters of neoliberalism, whiteness, maleness, heteronormativity, middle-class status, and mainstream Judeo-Christian morality (particularly in the discourse surrounding modesty). As I asserted in my second chapter, schools take the body to be natural, existing before inscription by society, and in specific capacities (e.g. sexuality and sex) that must be controlled and directed in order to create the most productive, i.e. able to contribute to the neoliberal marketplace, citizen- student possible. Specifically in this chapter, I draw out themes from dress codes that are currently in place in every high school, early college, and middle college program in Guilford County, North Carolina as well as secular independent schools in Guilford County, North Carolina. These themes illustrate the ideal citizen-student body, along the parameters listed above, that all others must try to

reach, though none succeed completely. Additionally, in this chapter I locate these schools both literally and symbolically: I explore the implications of physical location and subject/ability specialization on dress code parameters in Guilford County and the city of Greensboro. Symbolically, I locate these schools by questioning the relationship between the racial and class compositions of the school and the dress regulations in place. The GCS system has twenty-eight high schools, middle colleges, and early colleges and every school/program has its own, specific dress code in addition to the very general guidelines set by GCS, indicating that the demographic make-up of each school has some impact on the ways in which bodies must be regulated. Finally in this chapter, I compare the dress codes in Guilford County public schools and ideal citizen-student they construct to those of the handful of secular independent schools in the county in order to more fully flesh out the class dynamics of student bodies and the ways in which these intersect with race.

In exploring the concerns and points of focus for dress codes and the subsequent ideal bodies they demand students aspire to, this chapter begins to connect the experience of having a (raced, classed, gendered, sexed, sexualized, and political) body in a school with the dynamics of learning and calls for methods of resistance to the corporeal parameters of subjectivity that dress codes set in place. I take up this call for resistance in my fourth and final chapter in order to find the holes in the matrix of intelligibility (Butler, 2006) that might enable students to more freely question and explore the complexities of having a body and learning in that body each day.

A Note on the Methods Used in this Analysis

This portion of my work is a textual analysis that combines an analysis of literal dress code texts – the regulations as they are written and published – as well as a brief analysis, in combination with chapter two, of the body as text. I gathered the dress codes from twenty-eight Guilford County Schools and three secular, independent schools in Guilford County through school websites, over the phone, and via email. The only school with which I was never able to make contact via phone or email was The Academy at Smith located in Greensboro. Additionally, Dudley High School, Penn-Griffin School for the Arts, the Middle College at North Carolina A&T University, and the Middle College at Greensboro College provided me with their dress codes either over the phone or in person. I am, therefore, lacking the official wording as it may exist, but pursued my analysis with the information I received from the administrators I spoke to at each school. I was able to access complete dress codes for all three independent schools, either on the school's website or through speaking with an administrator who provided me with the official literature via email. It is important to note that the Greensboro Day School dress code was the only code not available through the school's website so I was able to access this via my own teacher handbook, a privilege afforded to me as a teacher at Greensboro Day School. I sought and received approval from the Upper School Division Director to use this text in my analysis.

In order to draw out the themes of individual dress codes, I read through every school's dress code three times. The first round of reading enabled me to pick out

general themes and begin to name these themes as generally as possible. The second round of reading helped me to be more precise in how I named themes given my previous reading as well as the greater context I had gained from reading all of the dress codes. Finally, I solidified these themes through my third reading and was able to bring together common language and themes to determine both common threads throughout dress codes as well as what I deem the “ideal body” that dress codes aim for students to approximate as closely as possible. I undertook this process separately for the GCS schools and the independent schools so as to have as fresh a perspective on dress codes as possible, particularly when venturing into independent school literature as those schools’ missions and practices differ from those of state-administered schools.

Know the Code: Expectations, Limitations, and (Bodily) Zones of Contention

In order to understand the expectations of the student body within the Guilford County Schools system, I examined all of the dress codes for the schools in the county. Given that all twenty-eight schools (including only mainstream high schools, middle colleges, and early colleges; I excluded programs for students with disabilities because I felt that many vectors of bodily construction, surveillance and discipline beyond just that of dress intersect at the site of disability, both visible and invisible) follow county guidelines with regard to other areas of school life (e.g. academics, athletics, and student safety), I expected the county to issue one detailed and comprehensive dress code, however this is not the case. Instead, the county’s guidelines are very general and refer more to consequences than specific modes of dress while each of the twenty-eight

schools has its own specific dress code, presumably tailored to its population and challenges, as well as its own set of consequences for various infractions. As I show later in my analysis, racial make-up and, to a lesser degree, geography play a role in this as do reactions to school-specific, local, and national developments ranging from incidents of violence to fashion trends. Overall, in my analysis I discovered that the main concerns expressed within all dress codes across the county as stated in the general Guilford County Schools guidelines are maintaining social standards, safety, and health. In this section, I explore the ways in which these concerns intersect to create bodily expectations for students as well as the specific ways in which dress codes discipline excessive or inadequate bodies under the auspices of these broad categories and concerns.

Social Standards

Though safety, health, and social standards follow one another in that order and in list form within the “Student Dress” section of the Guilford County Schools Student Handbook, my examination of all twenty-eight dress codes for the district revealed that the idea of maintaining certain social standards serves as the lens through which methods of maintaining health and safety develop. The language of “social standards” is quite general and ought to be open to interpretation by individual students and the adults in their lives, however, the accompanying *specifics* within each dress code make it clear that a racial, gendered, classed, and sexualized social standard sets the boundaries of students dress and style. As I illustrate in the following pages, that general social standard represents the ideals of and looks through the eyes of the white,

heteronormative, middle class, “properly” masculine, professional man, which results in the categorization of any other bodily shape or expression as delinquent (Foucault, 1995).

As I explain in chapter two, the status of delinquent is accompanied by certain pathologies in an effort to understand “absolute truths” of any specific deviance within the standardized social setting (definitively answering the “why is s/he like that?” and “what makes her/him do that?” questions) as well as supposed methods of rehabilitation to (re)incorporate the delinquent into proper society. What makes such categorization of an individual as delinquent problematic, what is troubling well beyond the pathology, is the idea of rehabilitation because in fact the delinquent serves a very important purpose *as a delinquent* that helps maintain social standards and boundaries. In other words, any norming system, which I maintain dress codes to be, serves as a center that is defined by its edges, its boundaries. Without the delinquent to discipline and to serve as a marker of unacceptable difference, the center loses its grip on subjectivity and the center’s importance in society. Additionally, in no way are all students supposed to be able to achieve the body of the white, heteronormative, middle class, “properly” masculine, professional man, rather must remain locked in the struggle to approach that standard, all the while reinforcing its values and supposed primal importance of safety, health, and the ability to learn. This purposely perpetual struggle along with continued (re)deployment of specific ideas about sexuality illustrate Foucault’s concept of biopower (1990) at work in dress codes: the power to control the life of the student, which is further-reaching in the scheme of greater

population control, according to Foucault's analysis of the social changes of the nineteenth centuries that continue today, than the power to dole out death.

In order to understand what bolsters the main idea of "acceptable social conduct" (Guilford County Schools Student Handbook, 2013), we must examine the general ideas of safety and health and the specific regulations put in place by each school to support them. First, it is crucial to explore the meanings of both terms because the various ways in which the dress codes support safety and health indicate widely-ranging understandings of both terms. The most obvious meaning of safety illustrated by the dress codes is physical safety. This manifests as prohibitions of gang clothing, long coats, certain jewelry, etc. Additionally, however, it appears that the safety of the state-sanctioned process of learning is of concern, which makes evident the efforts to preserve the Cartesian split between mind and body, particularly in language around "distraction." Finally, safety in the dress codes means the safety of proper heteronormativity, the supremacy of the male gaze, the sanitized student body (Alexander, 2005) and the proper order of maturation (Lesko, 2001) imagined for adolescent students at the conception of compulsory schools in the nineteenth century. This concern illustrates the eroticization of specific body parts according to scientific definitions around sex and sexuality I explore in chapter two and which connects those definitions to the white, masculine, middle class, heteronormative social standards on which I maintain dress codes center. The concern of health does similar work as that of safety, with added prohibitions of alcohol and tobacco (in line with legal guidelines that preserve the aforementioned proper order of maturation), illegal drugs, and

sexuality (presumably on the basis of preventing sexual assault through prohibiting any blatant promotion of sexuality as well as maintaining the sanitized student body in line with an expected order of maturation).

Social Standards through Physical Safety: Colors, Headgear, Jewelry, and Footwear

The first element of safety described above is physical safety, a theme which ran throughout the twenty-eight dress codes in Guilford County Schools. Some of the safety guidelines focus specifically on gang clothing; Ragsdale high school, for example, prohibits the color red entirely. While not documented as such, this prohibition likely stems from the correspondence between the color red and gang activity in the area. The Standard Mode of Dress (SMOD) guidelines only permit specific colors, with the exception of Smith high school which permits “polo-type” shirts of “any color” (“Ben L. Smith High School Standard Mode of Dress (SMOD) Policy”, 2013), and the color red is noticeably absent from that approved-colors list. Southwest Guilford high school, for example, only permits white, black, green, blue, gray, and yellow collared shirts with khaki, black, green, blue, or gray pants/shorts/skirts/dresses (bottoms). Many dress codes specifically prohibit “gang clothing” of any kind, though the specifics of what qualifies as gang clothing is left out of the code, presumably left to the discretion of administrators and teachers at the school. This lack of specificity signals the potential for targeting certain students, likely students of color and/or impoverished students, for gang activity based on their clothing. Ten of the twenty-eight schools’ dress codes include specific sections or lines

about prohibition of anything worn on the head, each of which mentions bandanas and bandanas are specifically linked to gang symbols in the Southeast Guilford high school dress code (“Student Dress Code”).

Additional prohibited “headgear” includes do rags, ear buds/headphones, handkerchiefs, wraps, scarves (mentioned only in one dress code – Southwest Guilford high school – and with no connection to religious guidelines), sun glasses, hats, hoods, wave caps, nets, sweatbands, goggles, headsets, beanies, beads, masks, earmuffs, and combs/picks. Here the demand for students to meet the standards of whiteness becomes evident, especially in the prohibition of items such as wraps, wave caps, and combs, items specifically used for the maintenance and styling of black hair. These headgear regulations (and indeed *all* dress code regulations) are meant to create a sense of uniformity in the vein of equality, but they end up falling into the neoliberal paradox of amorality. While they may appear to create equality by removing all headgear from schools and thus treating each student’s head and hair the same, they actually hold white hair as the standard. Mainstream white hair and hair styles do not require nets, wave caps, or combs, for example, making the regulation of such items specifically targeted at black hair. The U.S. Army recently faced criticism (Shen, 2014) for regulations along the same lines that denied the different and unique care required for black hair in its regulations on styles and acceptable versus unacceptable “fake” hair. Lastly, it is worth pointing out the regulations against students wearing hoods up on hooded sweatshirts. “Hoodies” with hoods up have long been considered a cultural symbol of delinquency, a fact made abundantly clear in mainstream society

with the killing of Florida teenager Trayvon Martin in 2012. Schools perpetuate this idea through this prohibition as well as in linking it with violence through implicitly labeling it a safety hazard in schools.

In addition to prohibiting specific colors and headgear, certain styles of jewelry and long coats, blankets, and towels are listed as prohibited items in many dress codes. With regard to jewelry, dress codes express anxiety over the potential for physical violence. There are many ways in which jewelry could be used to physically harm another person given trends in especially spiky accessories or even the rope-like quality of necklaces and bracelets. Grimsley high school's dress code, for example, explicitly prohibits any "[j]ewelry or accessories that could be used as a harmful object" ("Dress Code," 2013, Grimsley High School). Generally the accessories with such potential fall outside the "mainstream" fashions, which illustrates the ways in which this regulation maintains the supremacy of the center by limiting the edges. Long coats, blankets, and towels carry similar "potential harm" weight in the ability to hide weapons and to cover up other prohibited activity on campus, e.g. sexual activity. These regulations seem relatively practical on the surface, but reveal a disturbing anxiety over violence in schools and the expectation that students can and will use any means in order to commit this violence. While dress codes do not reveal other programs at work in schools to combat violence, they illustrate an intense reactionary tendency on the part of the school board and administrators to attack the surface of violence (i.e. the ability to hide weapons in order to bring them into a school) without addressing greater structures of oppression that can elicit violent behavior.

Additionally and most crucially, this anxiety over violence and the dress code regulations that result from it obfuscate the ways in which schools actually *call for* and *enact* violence through the dress code, namely through the forceful expulsion of certain students (in this case, whose bodies and/or clothing mark them as excessive and dangerous) from the school system via the dress code and other disciplinary codes and practices.

The final element of GCS dress codes that reflects a concern for both social standards and safety is the requirement in all twenty-eight dress codes that students wear shoes at all times. It is important to note that this is North Carolina law, yet some codes specifically prohibit any open- toe or open-back shoe while some only prohibit open-toe shoes or casual sandals/flip-flops. Since my project did not include an assessment of the ways in which and the degree to which the written code is enforced, rather is limited to a textual analysis, it is hard to say whether rules this precise and seemingly outside the scope of mainstream fashion and comfort are regularly and effectively enforced. These specifics are in line with general safety concerns in public places, but take on additional meaning when paired with more specific regulations around very casual footwear. Bedroom slippers, for example, are insufficient footwear in most GCS schools as well as loungewear/pajamas in general, regulations which point to concerns regarding the level of formality of dress at school. This connects to the “professional” lens and expectations for students to participate in the neoliberal marketplace after receiving their state-sanctioned education. On an anecdotal note drawn from my experience as a classroom teacher at the secondary level, it is not

uncommon to hear teachers, administrators, and parents speak in support of prohibitions of such casual clothing on the basis that school is a student's job or that one day s/he may have a job for which they must look professional and school is practice for that moment. Only one school, the STEM Early College at North Carolina A&T, specifically mentions "professional" dress (Alston, S., personal communication, May 9, 2014), and this portion of the school's dress code even goes on to specify that "professional" means "a dress, dress pants with a blouse, or skirt with a blouse for female dress and dress pants with a dress shirt and tie or khakis with a dress shirt and tie" for male dress. This narrow understanding of "professional" demonstrates that in addition to connecting learning to the specific goal of gaining employment upon graduation, the schools also have in mind a specific type of employment – one which aligns with white-collar, middle class/upper middle class/upper class managerial types of employment. While none of the other dress codes contain this specific verbiage, it is reasonable to make this connection between learning and employment given the national, regional, and local political rhetoric that inextricably connects the project of learning with the goal of employment and proper contribution to society.

Elements of physical safety are discerned easily in dress codes across the county and generally do not stir any controversy, given both the general priority of keeping children safe as well as all-too-frequent incidents of violence in schools on major and minor scales. While race is implicated in many of these regulations, particularly gang clothing and headgear, it does not appear as though the authors of these dress codes tried to hide that in any way, but can proceed as they feel necessary

under the imperative of safety. Definitions beyond that of physical safety, however, are much more subtle and implicit and include keeping safe the specific type of learning that is in line with the Cartesian split between mind and body, a system in which bodies are seen as “distractions” to learning, as well as preserving a proper order of maturation in which already-sexed and already-sexualized bodies must be sanitized in the face of cultural eroticization.

Metaphysical Safety: Preserving Cartesian Dualism through Specific Bodily Construction, Surveillance, and Discipline

As I discuss in the previous chapter, the general physical and curricular structures of schools in the United States support the idea of a defined split between mind and body. This Cartesian dualism denies any connections between the two and the ways in which they may work together and in tension. The most striking illustration of this within GCS dress codes is in the language of “distraction” and “disruption.” Northern Guilford high school, for example, states as a “General Rule: All students must dress in neat, clean attire that does not offend or distract others” (“Dress Code Policy,” 2013, Northern Guilford High School) and Northeast Guilford high school forbids any clothing that might “serve as a disruption to the educational process” (“Northeast Guilford High School Dress Code and Appropriate Dress Guidelines,” Northeast Guilford High School Students). Exactly what constitutes “distracting” and “disrupting” clothing is never precisely defined, but the accompanying regulations around all other types of dress coalesce into a definition that includes anything aside from the ideal student body: white, heteronormative, middle

class, professional, and male. This language serves several additional purposes, the first of which is to deny the significance that the distracting or disrupting clothing may serve to the person wearing the clothing. That article of clothing may make a student feel confident or excited about their body and when it is deemed as distracting the message received may very well be that the student's body and the connecting subjectivity are incorrect/excessive/socially unacceptable in some way. This example is very general yet the rules that follow such general statements in each GCS dress code (SMOD codes excluded) make specific links between body parts and types of bodies to distraction, disruption, or offense. These specifics demand surveillance of these body parts and their corresponding bodies in order to determine and punish delinquency.

As I explored the specifics of dress codes, the eroticization of specific body parts, both on a greater cultural scale and by the individual dress codes, became apparent. Specifically, shoulders, thighs (above mid-thigh), the groin, buttocks, breasts, back, and midriff receive a significant amount of time and attention from these regulations. Additionally, eleven of the twenty-eight GCS schools (excluding seven SMOD schools) forbid visible undergarments, though it remains unclear the definition of "visible" as that could indicate the visibility of the line of the undergarment through an article of clothing or the entire undergarment being visible. The focus on these body parts comes through language around shirt sleeves, tank top strap width, sagging, skirt/skorts/shorts length, shirt neckline, and shirt hemline, but disguising it thusly does not hide the anxiety around these specific body parts. For example, some schools

expressly forbid sleeveless shirts on girls, some schools forbid sleeveless shirts entirely, and some forbid them for male students, but some permit them under a two- or three-finger width rule. This illustrates an expectation of modesty for both boys and girls, though for boys this comes in the form of not showing off one's muscles while for girls it centers on keeping hidden a historically erotic part of the body, one's shoulders. Regulation and worry about hemlines is nothing new – shortening hemlines for women after the First World War, for example, were controversial and signaled a symbolic and literal sexual liberation that accompanied newfound economic/professional roles during the war. The groin as an area of concern with regard to sexuality is also nothing new as it boils down to the most basic (gendered and sexed) sexualization that bodies undergo in Western culture and philosophy (Butler, 2011). Long-standing scientific defining and marking of sex organs in combination with expectations of the proper order of maturation (Lesko, 2001) demands the obfuscation of such potentially-sexualized body parts and bodies. This occurs in the service of preserving the adolescent body as “learner” thus perpetuating and prioritizing the Cartesian split.

Nancy Lesko (2001) explores the potential for the existence of the teenaged mother in school for combatting the notion of a proper order of maturation. If the original purpose of schooling when it emerged during the nineteenth century was to ready a young person for participation in politics and in the marketplace, then sexuality had no place in schools. Students were expected to go to school, get a job, find a partner, and only then “use” their sexual potential to have children. For Lesko, teenaged mothers directly resist that compulsory life order as do any overtly sexual

students. Wanda Pillow (1997) develops a similar notion by arguing that the girls in her research, which centers on school programs for pregnant and parenting students, “demonstrate[s] the body is not so easily separable [from school], nor do [the teen mothers] want it to be” (Pillow, 1997). This overt sexuality, however, can come in the form of deliberate action (what pregnancy or mothering reveals that the students engaged in) or simply the “excessive” body: one with large breasts, one with prominent buttocks, one with an hourglass shape, etc. Dress codes, their strict regulation of the aforementioned eroticized body parts, and the ways in which their regulations make a clear attempt at maintaining a split between body and mind only to betray the notion that students are not sexual. Instead, these regulations around sexuality reveal an intense anxiety around a real, present, and active teenage sexuality.

It appears as though the more specific dress codes become with regard to certain articles of clothing, styles of clothing, and body parts, the more this anxiety becomes evident. Whereas vague and broad language such as “dress appropriately,” found in some of the independent schools’ dress codes I discuss later in this chapter, is similarly loaded, it reveals less about gendered, sexualized, classed, and racialized anxiety around bodies. Clothing trends/items mentioned specifically and repeatedly in GCS dress codes for seven schools and in SMOD regulations for the seven schools that follow those regulations are leggings, yoga pants, and pencil/tube skirts. Interestingly, these specific focuses are not linked to either male or female students, but larger cultural expectations of proper masculinity and femininity that most student feel compelled to approximate result in the enforcement of these rules taking place at

the site of girls' bodies rather than boys'. (Recent fashion trends, however, popularize leggings for men – a.k.a. “meggings,” though this is by no means mainstream, particularly not in the southeastern United States where such an embrace of femininity by men is less common.) Included in the schools that regulated these specific items of clothing are both majority white schools and schools with a majority population of students of color, which seems to point to a general fear of teenage girls' (sexualized) bodies. No doubt, since both leggings and yoga pants are a relatively recent trend (though one could argue that leggings come in and out of style fairly frequently), this also connects to the regulation of girls' bodies by media and the fashion industry. Regardless, language prohibiting items that are “form-fitted” and requiring that skirts or shirts worn over leggings to “cover the behind” is ubiquitous and troublesome. This is because it moves from the long-standing demand for *covering* one's culturally sexualized body parts (seen in neckline and hemline regulations) to blatantly demanding that the curvature of the body and the existence of the buttocks be denied, or at the very least highly santized.

This brings me back to the Cartesian dualist split between mind and body, the safety of which the language of the dress codes in GCS work to maintain. A national story about a middle school in Evanston, Illinois that has banned leggings, a clothing item highly regulated and of great concern within GCS dress codes given its explicit mention in five schools' dress codes as well as the general SMOD policy for the county, from the school brings to light this dualist concern along with evidence of a pervasive and gendered rape culture at work in the United States. The justification for this ban

stems from the belief on the part of administrators at the school that leggings are “too distracting to boys” (Hess, 2014) at the school (once again, language we see repeatedly in GCS dress codes as well as independent school codes), which supports the belief that one’s body must be subordinated in favor of engaging the mind in school work and that the two are mutually exclusive. It also illustrates a pervasive heteronormativity centered on girls’ responsibility for the actions of boys. This requirement for girls to consider how their body might affect the actions of boys not only assumes that all boys (and to some extent girls) experience heterosexual desire, it also engrains in girls’ sense of self that their body – in this instance, the existence of one’s buttocks and groin made clear by form-fitting fabric – is wrong. It sends the message that if that body can distract boys and even lead them to commit violent sexual behavior towards the girls that their body is therefore in some way to blame and a cause for shame and confusion. While GCS codes do not directly link leggings, yoga pants, and form-fitted skirts to “distraction” as the administrators at the Evanston, Illinois middle school do, the language in the preamble for these dress codes always includes “distraction” or “disruption” and is followed by these specific prohibitions and/or regulations about these items of clothing. Put into practice, the same impacts on subjectivity of girls in GCS schools as in Illinois are at stake.

On the opposite end of the “fit spectrum” from yoga pants, leggings, and pencil skirts are regulations about sagging and excessively loose clothing. This falls more in line with traditional concerns around safety as weaponry is more easily concealed in baggy clothing, but it also adds a racial and cultural component to dress codes.

Ragsdale high school (“Ragsdale High School Standard Dress Code, 2013-2014,” 2013) has the most detailed explanation of how clothes ought to fit a student, including demands for at least one inch of excess fabric on both sides of the torso (for tops) and/or at the top of both legs (for pants), but not so much extra fabric that a shirt cannot be comfortably tucked into one’s pants. Additionally, pants must touch one’s body all the way around at or near the natural waist in order for pants not to be deemed too large. Not only does this connect to anxiety around clothing trends that historically stem from people of color, but it also represents a Foucaultian power relation in which the school closely regulates, monitors, and punishes the ways in which the body comes to school. I cannot help but wonder what this means for the actual learning that takes place within the walls of an institution that so precisely regulates the pants, shirts, shoes, and headgear of the students who come there each day. Do they learn more about math, English, science, history, language, and art or about the gendered, racialized, classed, and sexualized expectations for them in the wider scope of the local, regional, and national culture?

A common complaint from critics of dress codes is that they focus unfairly on girls’ bodies. In perusing the GCS dress codes, I found this to be true both explicitly and implicitly. Some language applies to the female body (e.g. breasts), some language applies to clothing that mainstream, heteronormative U.S. culture associates with women and girls (e.g. skirts, dresses, yoga pants, leggings, camisoles, one-shoulder tops and dresses), and some language centers on body parts that could apply to both boys and girls, but culturally falls more frequently on the side of girls (e.g. exposed midriffs,

exposed thighs, exposed backs and shoulders). Any of this language, however, could come to apply to boys' bodies as male breasts, kilts, muscle shirts, midriff-bearing shirts and even short-shorts are not entirely uncommon for boys. The dress codes are written in a way that often discusses boys' and girls' clothing together though some codes, Northwest Guilford high school (Figure 1), for example, illustrate girls' and boys' appearances separately and through illustrations and some codes include specific lines about boys' shirts or girls' dresses ("Dress Code for NWHS," 2013). That most attention and time is spent on girls' clothing and potential violations points to both a cultural focus on girls' bodies as hypersexualized and "to blame" for boys' actions and fashion and media trends in which girls are encouraged to objectify and hypersexualize themselves in the service of maintaining both heteronormativity and a patriarchal power structure. The focus, implicitly and explicitly, in theory and in practice, does end up on girls' bodies, and they receive that message clearly and yet it is just as important to remember that boys receive that message as well, which perpetuates a cultural and philosophical focus on patriarchy and heteronormativity in which the male gaze is prioritized and the responsibility is on women and girls.

Figure 1. Dress Code Illustration Provided for Students and Parents on the Northwest High School Website



Heteronormativity and patriarchy are not the only norms at stake in dress codes. My research in these GCS codes revealed a focus on whiteness, middle class status, and professionalism. Rebecca Raby (2004) cites a study by Bowditch (1993) of American high schools which found that “school’s disciplinary procedures are used to ‘get rid of’ students who seem to be troublemakers, students who are disproportionately Black, Hispanic, and low-income” (72). I contend that dress codes are part of those disciplinary codes. Aforementioned prohibitions of certain headgear (e.g. wave caps, combs, nets) and sagging along with some schools’ stringent guidelines around proper fit indicate a focus on eliminating clothing and styling trends common to students of color. Ubiquitous prohibition of clothing with tears or holes and the requirement that clothing be “neat” and “clean” targets students living in poverty as it is not necessarily possible for those students to access new clothing when older clothing sustains damage or to keep clothes clean when they may only have a

few items to wear and/or no access to laundry facilities, not to mention what their living conditions may be when they leave school grounds each day. Just as regulations around leggings send the message to girls that they are responsible for boys' actions through how they regulate their overly eroticized and apparently "wrong" bodies, regulations around headgear, sagging, neatness, and holes/tears sends the message to students of color and impoverished students that they are "wrong" and must work in very specific ways to fit properly into the social fabric of the school and greater culture and economy or risk expulsion through the violence of the dress code and its consequences.

Health through the Lens of Safety

The final concern I see in GCS dress codes, in addition to distraction, disruption, and safety, is health. This is closely tied to safety, of course, but takes on slightly different dynamics in the regulation of clothing with alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs on it. All of these items or the promotion of these items is explicitly prohibited in every dress code and correspond to local, state, and federal laws as well as Lesko's proper order of maturation. Since illegal drugs are, obviously, illegal, it makes sense that state-sponsored schools would forbid their image or promotion on campus. Since it is illegal for anyone under the age of eighteen to purchase and/or use tobacco products and anyone under the age of twenty-one to purchase and/or consume alcohol and since high schools serve students generally up to age nineteen at the latest, these prohibitions make sense as well. While older students could technically purchase and/or use tobacco products, in order to preserve the entire community, tobacco

remains forbidden. What strikes me about these regulations is that, with the exception of illegal drugs, students will be under great pressure to consume these forbidden products upon their eighteenth and twenty-first birthdays. Thus, these regulations actually work against the production of the neoliberal citizen student, ready to work hard, purchase freely, and participate responsibly in democracy upon graduation. While regulation of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drug images and promotion on high school campuses does not create a collapse of any of these three markets, it is an interesting facet of dress codes based on the legal definition of when a citizen-student is ready to partake in tobacco and alcohol. The dress codes support and help to maintain the legal markers of eighteen and twenty-one as proper times to become consumers and participants in these specific markets, which parallels their maintenance of the proper order of maturation (Lesko, 2001) with regard to sexuality and professionalism as well.

In my examination of GCS dress codes, I discovered the white, male, heteronormative, middle class, professional lens through which authors of dress codes and school administrators in general see the students coming into their schools each day. That standard is literally and symbolically impossible for many students resulting in rejection of the standards and failure through missed class time or even expulsion or a constant struggle to approximate that standard. For students who reject and fail, the consequences can be dire as lacking a high school diploma, which limits their socioeconomic path leading to untold difficulties and struggles in life. Students who engage with the dress code and maintain the likely impossible struggle support, through

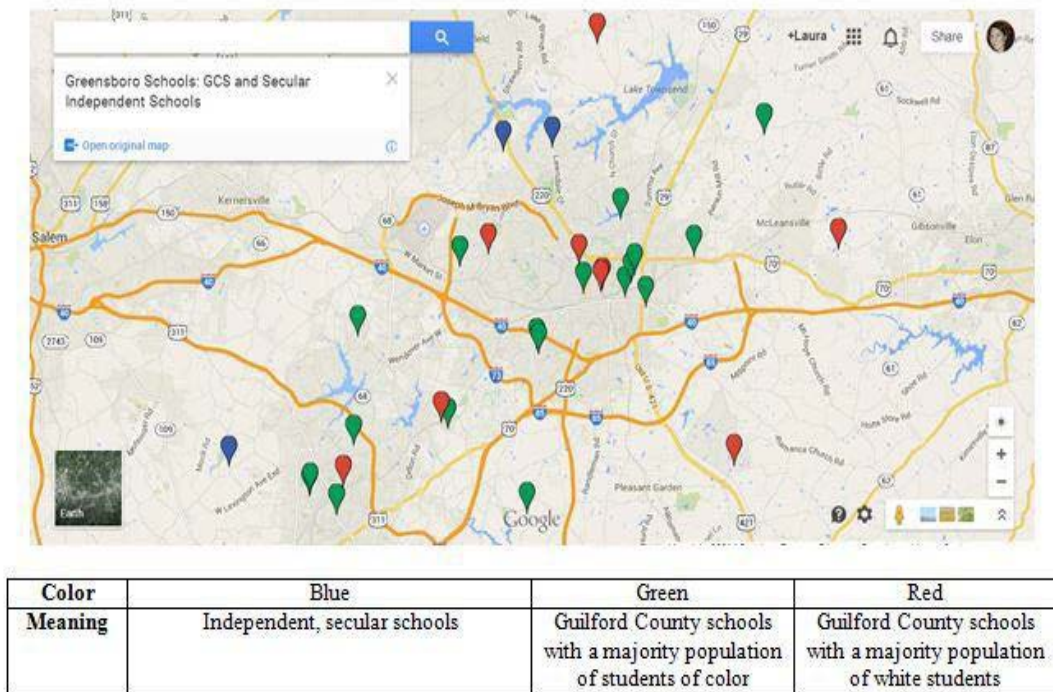
their unavoidable delinquency, the standard and deeply internalize their “wrong” body as part of their subjectivity. This, in turn, impacts who they are as members of society in the greater sense from their participation in democratic processes to their media consumption to their professional life, always maintaining the standards of whiteness, maleness, heteronormativity, middle class status, and professionalism.

Geography and Demographics: Maintaining the Standard throughout Guilford County

After drawing out the recurring themes within all the dress codes in Guilford County Schools, I located each school on a map of Guilford County and color coded these locations according to the racial demographics of each school (Figure 2) (Scott, K., personal communication, May 8 and May 23, 2014; Shoptaw, N., personal communication, April 9, 2014; Romberg, M., personal communication, May 23, 2014). Located in Guilford County, the city of Greensboro has a long and complex racial history, even serving as the start of the sit-in movement at the downtown Woolworth store on February 1, 1960. I found that schools located in the suburbs and schools focused either on the arts or catering to high-achieving students were majority white and schools located in more urban areas and/or serving students in need of extra academic support were majority students of color (defined as any student who is not explicitly white). The three secular independent schools in Guilford County, however, do fall in line with this geographic history since the two Greensboro schools are located in the northwest suburban quadrant of the city and the one school in High Point is located in a suburban and almost rural area outside the western border of the city. While GCS dress

codes are not overtly different based on these racial differences there is a difference in specificity and the number of schools using SMOD along racial and achievement lines.

Figure 2. Map of Guilford County Schools and Secular, Independent Schools in Guilford County



According to the Guilford County Schools website, seven GCS schools use Standard Mode of Dress, or SMOD, as the guidelines for appropriate school attire. Each school clarifies its use of SMOD through additional guidelines, but overall this dress permits only collared shirts of specific colors (no red) and waist-fitted pants, skirts, and shorts, the latter two of which must fall to the knee. Individual school policy addendums prohibit headgear, gang wear, and leggings/jeggings/tight pants as well as make some different requirements for skirt/short/skort length, but otherwise adhere to

the brief, but specific guidelines of SMOD. Also, different schools allow different additions to the SMOD policy with regard to sweatshirts, coats, and shoes, but otherwise fall into these strict guidelines. All seven of these schools serve a majority population of students of color, percentages ranging from 57% students of color to 93.5% students of color. All of these schools are either urban or in the southern or eastern parts of Guilford County suburbs. None of the majority white schools in Guilford County, nor suburban schools in the northern and western portions of the county require SMOD. While the geographical correlation is not the strongest, the racial demographics of SMOD schools indicate an effort to more highly regulate schools with high populations of students of color as opposed to schools with high populations of white students.

The other set of schools that have brief dress codes are schools for very high academic achieving students and schools that specialize in the arts. These include the early college programs at Guilford Technical Community College and Guilford College (GTCC), the Academy at Central, and Penn-Griffin School for the Arts and Weaver Academy for Performing/Visual Arts and Advanced Technology. The Early College at Guilford dress code policy is the shortest at barely six lines long and incredibly vague. It includes the standard GCS expectation for students to dress “in a safe, healthy, and non-distracting manner” (“Appropriate School Dress,” 2013), echoing my earlier analyses of safety, health, and distraction, as well as prohibitions of alcohol and tobacco imagery/promotion. The rest of this dress code is interesting for the way in which it focuses solely on what are considered in mainstream,

heteronormative culture to be girls' fashions and therefore most stringently survey and discipline girls' bodies, despite the almost-even male to female ration. (It is important here, however, to mention that the ways in which GCS demographers define "male" and "female" may differ from the gender identities and corresponding clothing that students choose for themselves.) Strapless tops, tank tops, short shorts and skirts (though there is not guideline to help determine what is "short"), and low/high cut tops are deemed "inappropriate." This focus on girls' bodies in such a succinct dress code policy connects strongly to the maintenance of Cartesian dualism, the preservation of mind over body being especially strong in a school geared toward extremely high-achieving students. The Academy at Central is strikingly similar with additions around appropriate size and explicit prohibition of gang-related clothing. The Early College at Guilford is 49% students of color while the Academy at Central is 83% students of color, which illustrates my earlier point about the need to push more strongly for whiteness in schools with higher populations of students of color through fit and gang focuses. The early colleges through GTCC abide by GTCC's dress code, which similarly focuses on girls' bodies, but also includes more attention to consequences as well as the need to dress "professionally" since the ultimate goal at GTCC is to increase one's employability.

The arts schools, Penn-Griffin and Weaver Academy, are both majority white students and are both located in central urban areas (Penn-Griffin in High Point and Weaver in Greensboro). Both schools have considerably higher percentages of female students (73% at Penn-Griffin and 68% at Weaver) (Shoptaw, N., personal

communication, April 9, 2014), which is illustrated not only in an increased focus on girls' styles of clothing, but also specific language around girls' shoes at Penn-Griffin and extensive discussion of hem length at Weaver. Regardless, these dress codes are considerably briefer than other GCS schools, which I assert is connected to the racial make-up and gender balance in the schools. If, as I argue previously in this chapter and to briefly personify dress codes, these dress codes look through a white, male, heteronormative, middle class, professional lens, then these schools have less to be concerned over with regard to asking their students to perform for that lens. Being majority white schools most students do not have to be regulated thusly nor is that standard necessarily an effective method of discipline. Additionally, being majority female, these schools can justify dress codes that focus on girls' bodies since most of their resources, time, and space also go to these students. It is also easier to justify "distraction" for male students as a reason for stronger surveillance on girls at the schools since they are in the minority in these spaces.

Secular Independent Schools in Guilford County: An Analysis and Comparison to GCS

Independent schools occupy an interesting position in my analysis of dress codes in Guilford County. I chose to analyze only dress codes for secular independent schools in Guilford County because for me to truly understand and analyze dress codes that are influenced by religious beliefs would necessitate a theological understanding beyond the scope of this project's original intent. Additionally, religious organizations' missions in educating often deviate from the general mission of educating and thus

require in-depth research separate from this project. I also chose to eliminate Oak Ridge Military Academy, also located in Guilford County, on the basis that the United States Army operates according to military guidelines and philosophy, which would also necessitate an understanding beyond the scope of this project. The result of making these choices in my research revealed an important regional detail about the religious culture of Guilford County; there are only three secular independent high school programs in the county but many dozens more religiously-affiliated secondary schools. These three independent schools are Greensboro Day School, Noble Academy, and Westchester Country Day School. In the following section, I explore the geographic locations of these three schools, their racial compositions, their tuitions, their self-identified missions in education, and the important themes of their dress codes in order to see what similarities and differences exist with GCS dress codes and the impact(s) that demographics may have on how the two sets of dress codes compare.

It is important at this point for me to locate myself in this discussion of independent schools before I proceed with my analysis. I currently teach in the high school at Greensboro Day School (GDS). I have been part of the GDS community for eight years and have found great personal and professional satisfaction, growth, and challenge at this school. It is a place I love very dearly and am therefore invested in critiquing in the service of improving myself as an educator as well as the school community. For example, throughout my graduate studies I have undertaken critique of GDS from various angles from its experiential

learning curriculum to its use of space as that is relevant to students with different physical abilities. As an educator, I make social justice a main component of the curriculum that I am fortunate to be free to develop on my own and see that as part of the purpose of my analysis here. I have plentiful “inside” knowledge of the drafting and enforcement of the dress code at GDS, but have chosen to refrain from explicitly exploring that aspect of my experience and instead focus solely on the text of the dress code.

As mentioned previously, Greensboro Day School and Noble Academy are located in suburban northwest Guilford County, a majority white part of Guilford County and Greensboro. Westchester Country Day School is located in suburban (almost rural) western Guilford County outside the city of High Point. Both Greensboro Day and Westchester were founded during the desegregation period in the southeastern United States, 1970 and 1967 respectively, and are inextricably linked to the trend of “white flight” from public schools, regardless of their stated founding purposes. Though not part of their official histories or stated missions, these schools provided places for parents to send their children who did not want to participate in the integration process. Noble Academy was founded in 1987 as the first and only school completely dedicated to students with “learning disabilities” (“About Us,” 2014), which distinguishes it from GDS and WCDS historically. All three schools require tuition from families, but GDS is the only school that requires the same tuition for all grades of high school: just under \$21,000 for the 2013-2014 school year. WCDS asks families to

contribute what they can, a policy in line with their mission “to help bright students and families join [their] school” (“Affordability,” 2009) with tuition requirements ranging from just under \$3,000 per year to just under \$16,000 per year for grades nine through twelve in 2013-2014. Finally, Noble Academy requires families to pay differently based on grade level with tuition for grade nine falling into the “K-9” category of just under \$18,000 per year and grades ten through twelve costing just over \$18,000 per year for the 2013-2014 school year. These tuition requirements clearly make these schools out of reach for the majority of families in Guilford County though each school make it explicit that families can apply for financial aid, the process of which is not available publicly.

Given these tuition parameters and in connection with offered, need-based financial aid, it is not necessarily surprising that all three of these schools are majority white. Westchester Country Day School has the largest population of students of color: 32% of the 125-member high school student body (Scott, K., personal communication, May 8 and May 23, 2014). Westchester determines students of color through four distinct categories: African-American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Other. Greensboro Day School has the second highest percentage of the student body who are students of color: 19.35% of 341 students. I did not receive a specific breakdown of how the school determines students of color other than that it means any student who is not Caucasian as well as the fact that these numbers do not include students studying at GDS on I-20 visas. GDS has a sizeable population of

international degree seeking students from Nigeria, Brazil, China, South Korea, and Germany totaling fifteen students. Added to the official statistics provided by the school (excluding the student from Germany), this makes the percentage of the student body who are students of color 23.4%, much closer to the percentage at WCDS (O'Brien, V., personal communication, May 8, 2014). This makes sense given how close in total size and educational mission the two schools are to each other, something I explore below. Finally, Noble Academy, considerably smaller than GDS and WCDS at only 69 students in the high school grades, includes only five students of color (three African-American and two Asian-American) in its student body, roughly 7% of the high school student body (Romberg, M., personal communication, May 23, 2014). While these demographics, in combination with tuition requirements of all three schools (Table 1; see Appendix A for a comparison of all Guilford County schools on these terms), are an important piece of the ways in which the dress codes are racialized and classed, it is important to note that independent schools place specific emphases in their curriculum and community without any restriction. This means that if a school identifies itself as college preparatory, it is inextricably linked to the goal of making students employable in the future. That goal of attaining professional status rings loudly through all three dress codes.

Table 1. Tuition, Students in Grades 9-12, and Percentage of Student Body Who are Students of Color in Secular, Independent Schools in Guilford County

School	Tuition for Grades 9-12	Total Number of Students in Grades 9-12	Percentage of Student Body in Grades 9-12 Who are Students of Color
Greensboro Day School	\$20, 975	341	19.35% [increases to 23.4% when students on I-20 visas are included]
Noble Academy	\$17,290-\$18,050	69	7.24%
Westchester Country Day School	Grade 9: \$2,828-\$15,360 Grades 10-12: \$2,768-\$15,720	353	24,1%

This leads to the final important component to consider about these three secular, independent schools is their mission statements. While the purposes of some GCS schools vary, from specializing in remediation to arts to technology to high-achieving students, *every* independent school must craft a unique mission statement. This is not only to clarify the goals of the organization, which is essential for success regardless, but also to attract business. Independent schools must “sell themselves” to the community based on how they see themselves serving that community and the mission statement is an important component in that public image as well as shaping the policies and educational direction of the school. All three schools consider themselves to be college preparatory institutions, but despite sharing that goal they all differentiate themselves from each other in specific ways. Greensboro Day School’s mission centers on developing three main facets of the students who attend: intellect,

ethics, and interpersonal skills. These skills are mentioned specifically as beneficial for the students to become “constructive contributors to the world” (“GDS Fast Facts,” 2008). Additionally, the school prides itself on the social components of education along with fostering a “diverse community” (“GDS Fast Facts,” 2008), providing extracurricular activities, and providing global perspectives. Westchester’s mission and philosophy are similar, mentioning the development of “moral, academic, artistic, and athletic excellence” (“Mission and Philosophy,” 2009) along with a strong sense of community between students, teachers, and parents. All of this is meant to encourage and facilitate lifelong joy in learning. Philosophically, Westchester lists independent thinking, personal growth, and serving others as guiding principles in its community-centered learning environment. Noble Academy is different from GDS and WCDS in that it focuses specifically on students with learning disabilities. Their webpage explains that the school is meant to ensure that students whose learning differences have made them feel “different” in the past no longer feel that way since they are surrounded by students in similar circumstances. Additionally, Noble asserts that it can help a student transition into a traditional learning environment or maintain their place in this specialized school while simultaneously experiencing the rigor of a college preparatory curriculum and gaining strategies from specialists with whom they work each day to help transition them into the collegiate learning environment.

All three schools’ dress codes begin similarly to those of Guilford County Schools with a general preamble of sorts that illustrates social norms and safety to be the guiding factors for dress codes. Similar to GCS codes, the maintenance of social

norms persists in independent school dress codes under the guise of “modesty,” “pride,” and “respect for oneself and one’s community.” These terms are incredibly vague, yet incredibly loaded. Only the GDS dress code acknowledges that interpretation of appropriate dress is individual, but then goes on to explain distraction is the key focus of defining appropriateness and other vague language. Additionally, it is important to remember, as I explained at length above, that the idea of safety is defined well beyond that of physical safety to include the safety to the project of learning within the Cartesian dualist paradigm that considers mind separate from body and the preservation of heteronormativity. This definition of safety runs throughout all three schools’ dress codes particularly in the goal of minimizing “distraction” and also respecting the community. Regardless, when interpreted through the lens of the specifics of the dress code, modesty, pride, and respect come to fall in line with the white, heteronormative, middle class, professional male parameters seen in the dress codes of GCS schools.

For independent schools’ dress codes, maintenance of social norms focuses very specifically on girls’ bodies, illustrating the aforementioned heteronormative male lens. While GCS dress codes made ample mention of articles of clothing and jewelry that could/could not be worn by either boys or girls (despite a focus in more specific rules on girls’ clothing), the independent schools’ dress codes seem to focus primarily on girls with only a few specific lines dedicated to boys’ dress or adornment. The result is that unless boys are mentioned specifically in a regulation, the default application of the regulation is to girls. The specifics applied to boys include prohibiting sleeveless shirts or tank tops, encouragement to tuck in shirts, and requirements for ties and pants with

belts on special occasions. Based on this linguistic structure, other specifications in the dress codes with regard to exposed midriff, shoulders, thighs, undergarments, and/or groin focus squarely on girls. Additionally, leggings/jeggings make an appearance only in the Noble Academy dress code and under similar circumstances to the regulations in GCS codes. The one possible exception to this focus on girls' bodies would be prohibitions against sagging in the Westchester dress code, but only if read through as part of the current fashion and cultural script in which boys usually sag, though it is not entirely uncommon for girls' pants' waists to be below their hips. The social norm to be preserved here, it would seem, is that girls and their bodies are most responsible for the state of learning and community on these independent school campuses.

One term in line with social norms that is used vaguely and in the service of maintaining white, middle class, heteropatriarchal norms in both the GDS and Westchester dress codes is "respect." Both schools' codes essentially discuss respect for oneself and one's community (including, more specifically in the GDS code, one's peers). Again, if this word were only used in the context of the opening preamble to the dress code and not accompanied by the specifics then included in the rest of the code, it might not be so suggestive of heteronormativity, but because it is followed by specific focuses on girls' bodies (with the aforementioned exceptions for boys' clothes) it suggests that respect is narrowly defined through the heteronormative lens. It implies the freedom-with-restraint of neoliberalism (Bernstein in Cheng et al, 2012/2013) in terms of owning one's own sexuality as well. Additionally, whiteness is inherent in this term and other vague terms of the dress codes in prohibitions against

sagging and requirements for fit. Lastly, class and professional expectations play a role in these dress codes when tattoos, piercings aside from the ears, “unnatural hair color,” tears, holes, patches, and ravelled are prohibited as well as the allowance by Westchester to wear college t-shirts on designated dress-down days. Clearly, all three schools mention college preparation in their mission statement so this is no surprise, but it emphasizes that as a common goal and expectation among students despite the fact that mostly likely it was the adults in their lives who made the decision for them to attend the school. Finally, the prohibitions listed above in service of helping students learn and maintain “professional” dress presents a limited picture of what professions students should consider. “Unnatural hair color” and tattoos might not be considered desirable in certain office settings, but are perfectly appropriate in other areas of employment.

Being independent schools with explicitly-stated goals centered on college preparation, these three schools are free to develop dress codes according to their missions and corresponding values. GDS and Westchester are also deeply connected to the history of white flight in North Carolina in the wake of school integration policies. Thus, it is no surprise that these schools continue to market themselves as different from GCS schools in curriculum and in safety (both physically and intellectually), both of which are evident in the appearance of their students. These students most closely approximate the white, heteronormative, middle class, professional male goal that GCS dress codes set out because, given the tuition requirements for attendance, they *are* mostly white, heteronormative, middle class children of middle-class and upper-class

professionals. Additionally, it is easy to subordinate concerns about the ways in which dress codes might uphold an ideal that symbolically eliminates students of color, LGBTQ students, and students experiencing poverty because the “American Dream” of a college education and all the opportunities for socioeconomic advancement that come with it are basically ensured through the education a student receives at these schools. There is a lot at stake, therefore, for the small populations of students who fall into those categories or any intersections of those categories, to best approximate this ideal student body in order to reach for the success that might otherwise be elusive.

These factors, combined with the sheer fact that they are independent schools that families/kinship units have the choice to attend or not attend, provides school administrators and other members of the community to create and enforce whatever dress code they see fit. The neoliberal rhetoric around choice and one’s ability to make it comes into play here as the assumption that choice is free is deeply steeped in the denial of the realities of material circumstances. This becomes especially troubling in light of recent political rhetoric around school vouchers and school choice. Regardless, these independent school dress codes show some differences from GCS dress codes based on the populations they serve, but overall align with the white, heteronormative, middle class, professional male standard that bodies in secondary schools in the United States are supposed to approximate. Students in all schools, it therefore seems, are subject to intense surveillance, bodily construction, discipline and marginal delinquent status in the service of maintaining the white, middle class heteronormativity at the center of U.S. culture and society.

Conclusion: Punishment, Citizenship, and Maintaining White Heteronormativity

One portion of the dress codes for both Guilford County Schools and the three secular, independent schools in Guilford County that I have not yet mentioned is punishment. Punishment for dress code infractions is not a major part of any of the dress codes in terms of specificity or length of explanation, but it is significant in the way it illustrates the impact of dress codes on students in the classroom, outside of school, and as members of a greater social body as well as the power of administrators and teachers it illustrates.

With regard to classroom impact, the general impact of the dress code is the potential for missed class time. This seems to be in tension with the mission of having a dress code in the first place, which is (I generalize here) to enhance learning by removing distraction, disruption, and safety/health concerns. Instead, when a student fails to comply with one or more regulations in the dress code, they are pulled from class in order to have a conversation with a teacher or an administrator and then, depending on the school, to either change into clothing provided by the school or call an adult in their life to bring them appropriate clothing. Many dress codes mention that repeated infractions could lead to more severe disciplinary consequences, but fail to specify beyond that. The general GCS guidelines state that the first three infractions result in in-school consequences (with no specificity beyond that) and that any further

infraction will result in no more than one Saturday detention or out-of-school suspension. Regardless, students who fail to comply with the dress code miss class time, defeating the purpose of the dress code for them as individuals while supposedly maintaining it for the rest of the student body.

The dress code and its punishments do not necessarily consider a student's life outside of school either. All of the independent school codes use the word "parent" in their description of consequences and GCS codes alternate between the word "parent" and the word "guardian." While the GCS codes are more inclusive by recognizing that not all students live with or are responsible to "parents," it would be most thoughtful to simply recognize the "adult(s) in the student's life." Additionally, some schools' codes require that a student return home to change, which denies the possibility that a student may not be able to return home during the school day as well as the possibility that the student does not have anything else "appropriate" to change into. That student will miss out on even more class time as well as undergo intense stress due to whatever complications they experience in attempting to return home and/or change.

Finally, dress code consequences demonstrate the enormous power that teachers and administrators have over determining what bodies are in line with expectations and what bodies are excessive. Many codes speak to the fact that teachers and administrators have the ultimate decision-making power over infractions as well as that these adults can make decisions about changes to the dress code. Overall, they are responsible for who "passes" and who gets "dress coded." This process is entirely

subjective as there are some bodies that teachers likely do not even think to look at – namely white, middle class, heteronormative male bodies – because they are so in line with the “norm” that they do not stand out. Then overweight bodies, tall bodies, brown and black bodies, impoverished bodies, gender queer bodies, etc. stand out and receive much heavier surveillance than those closest to the “norm.” This impact is heavy as students can then internalize the “wrongness” of their bodies and what that means for their place as part of the complex social fabric of the school and of the greater community.

In my analysis of the dress codes of the central Guilford County Schools office, the twenty-eight individual Guilford County public schools, and the three secular, independent schools in Guilford County revealed the ultimate goal of an ideal student body: white, heteronormative, middle class, professional, and male. The dress codes, therefore, take into account mainstream fashion trends, greater social trends and issues (such as violence in schools ranging from isolated incidents to gang activity), and Western culture’s gendered, classed, and racial power hierarchy in specifying prohibited and acceptable clothing, jewelry, and other adornment. As this chapter’s close analysis of these dress codes reveals, dress codes then must focus on girls’ bodies and the bodies of impoverished students and students of color to best accomplish these goals. What results is a complex matrix that students must negotiate in order to best perform (in the same sense as Althusser) as citizen-student in order to be permitted to remain knitted into the social fabric of the school and of the nation. This matrix,

however, includes a system of delinquency, meant to maintain students as “always-not-quite” and to hold them on the margins in order to maintain the supremacy of the center. What follows in my fourth and final chapter is an analysis of the ways in which students exist within this “delinquent” status and find the holes in the matrix in order to resist these expectations of the citizen-student and therefore alter the subjectivity that dress codes attempt to dictate.

CHAPTER IV

RESISTANCE WEARS LEGGINGS: FINDING THE PORTALS IN THE MATRIX AND MAKING THE TURN TOWARD CHANGE

...we must move beyond the valorization of historically suppressed values and toward “endless complication” and a “dizzying accumulation of narratives”... From this perspective, the truly resistant female body is, not the body that wages war on feminine sexualization and objectification, but the body that, as Cathy Schwichtenberg has put it “uses simulation strategically in ways that challenge the stable notion of gender as the edifice of sexual difference... [in] an erotic politics in which the female body can be refashioned in the flux of identities that speak in plural styles.” (Derrida and McDonald, 1982; Schwichtenberg, 1990 quoted in Bordo, 1993; pp. 267-268)

Identifying with a gender under contemporary regimes of power involves identifying with a set of norms that are and are not realizable, and whose power and status precede the identifications by which they are insistently approximated. This “being a man” and this “being a woman” are internally unstable affairs. (Butler, 2011, p. 86)

Students at Haven Middle School in Evanston, Illinois reached their limit with their school’s dress code in March of 2014 and decided to protest the school’s policy on leggings. While it is unclear as to whether or not the school banned leggings outright or if they put in place tighter regulations regarding the length of skirts that must be worn over leggings, the message the girls received through this conversation about and regulation of their clothing was loud and clear: “we [girls] should be guilty for what guys

do,” according to Sophie Hasty, a student at Haven (Fisher, 2014). Hasty continues in an interview with Slate.com that “the focus is mainly on the girls at the moment” (Fisher, 2014), illustrating how abundantly clear the imbalanced focus on girls’ bodies at the school really is, particularly to the girls themselves. The administrative response and resulting parent dialogue that followed revolves around concerns about the hypersexualization of girls and ways to construct a dress code that limits the impact (at least during school hours) that the purportedly pervasive culture of sexualization has on young girls and women. While Hasty clearly states in her interview with Slate that when she is in public she really does not care if people look at her in leggings, it could be argued that she is giving in to cultural demands of femininity in which she shows her body in specific ways and in which specific body parts are eroticized through and for the male gaze. Yet, she feels she has some agency when she chooses this particular item of clothing, agency that school administrators wish to strip her of in favor of reinforcing a more “fatherly,” yet still decidedly male, gaze that locates the line of purity and innocence on the other side of leggings and yoga pants.

When Sophie and her classmates protest these regulations by wearing their leggings and holding up signs that wonder “Are my pants lowering your test scores?” (Sun-Times article), are they engaging in resistance to the white, heteronormative, patriarchal, middle class, professional standards that school dress codes, as I illustrate in chapter three, set up for students to approximate? Or are they simply reinforcing those standards through their delinquency, the marginal location of which merely redefines and props up the center? Or are they (re)deploying the greater cultural standards of

hypersexualized and heteronormative femininity? It was assumed throughout the article that any desire that might stem from the “revealing” nature of leggings and yoga pants corresponds with heterosexual desire so perhaps this protest even (re)deploys the center of heteronormativity, given the lack of conversation around homosexual desire or any potential deviation from heteronormative sexual behavior. Sophie mentions in her interview that when boys are dress-coded, their infractions are usually regarding sagging, a fashion trend with racial and socioeconomic roots that is highly gendered. For example, maxi skirts/dresses, perhaps equivalent to large, baggy pants, are seen as perfectly acceptable attire for school given the passive and restrained expectations of femininity, which a skirt after all most closely approximates. This gendered concern is reflected again in protests about leggings: a demand for students to be able to choose to be subject to the male, heterosexual, normatively feminine gaze that leggings facilitate. What marginalized concerns outside this case become invisible in light of the leggings debate taking center stage?

In my second chapter I analyze Butler’s heteronormative matrix of intelligibility (2006) and the ways in which it is at work in the theories of dress codes as well as the ways in which these codes act as straightening orientation devices (Ahmed, 2006). I also use the idea of neoliberalism to critique regulatory systems in general and the dress code in specific as well as Foucault’s ideas on discipline, surveillance, and biopower to explore modern methods of population control and the ways in which multiple layers of oppression impact students through the dress code. This combined analysis reveals the ways in which oppression is hidden as well as the ways in which it is pervasive,

particularly as it is multilayered. In the quotations that begin this chapter, Bordo and Butler posit the complexities of gender identity and what that might mean for resistance, power, and subjectivity. In this chapter, I extend these ideas to encompass race, class, sexuality, and professionalism as well in order to explore possibilities for resistance to dress codes in secondary schools. I focus specifically on the idealized student body that I illustrate that dress codes construct in chapter three using Guilford County public and secular, independent schools' dress codes and the ways in which that idealization is impossible for everyone, including those whose bodies seem to correlate precisely with it.

While these theoretical and concrete analyses may indicate that resistance to the dress code is impossible, I take the stance in this chapter that resistance is possible through portals – albeit narrow portals – in the complex matrix of surveillance, discipline, delinquency and biopower that dress codes build. In combination with Dean Spade's (2013) consideration of an intersectional approach to resistance that takes into account the multiple vectors of oppression that bodies can experience, this chapter searches for the portals through and out of the matrix that enable effective resistance through crises that induces structural change. While these portals may be narrow, complex, and multifaceted, the crisis/crises they can incite – seen at Haven Middle School in the clear tensions between a young girl's agency and control over her body and the traditionalist school administration seeking to preserve her “innocence and purity” as defined by patriarchy – if pursued, can create greater cultural and structural change surrounding norms of gender, sex, sexuality, class, and race. Finally, I explore the idea of embodied pedagogy as a potential site of resistance that would also incite cultural crises and address

greater structural oppression as well as a reevaluation of education and learning that rejects the Cartesian separation between mind and body.

What is to be Resisted: What is this White, Male, Heteronormative, Professional, Middle Class Body?

I assert in chapter three of this project that the content of Guilford County Schools' and secular, independent schools' dress codes reveals a desire/demand for students to approximate a specific, idealized body: that of a white, heteronormative, professional, middle class male. Surely, therefore, this body must exist in its most perfect and pure form somewhere in the school building, regardless of the demographic make-up of any given school. For the most part, this student whose body represents the intersection of all of these qualities has an easy road with regard to dress code enforcement; he is rarely if ever questioned about his dress, not just because he likely dresses the part each day, but because the parameters of the dress code dictate a focus on bodies other than this student's so teachers and administrators likely do not notice any infractions and/or are liable to give him the benefit of the doubt. I have witnessed such a "center" student wearing a shirt promoting a particular craft beer that declares its origin as Munich, Germany, and teachers looked the other way given the boutique brand of alcohol (often these shirts are very well designed and even artistic, disguising the fact that they are promoting alcohol) as well as the socioeconomic class status that owning that shirt indicates. Once again, however, the real reason he did not undergo the same surveillance is because his body is the standard and what enforcers are looking for is the substandard, excessive body-in-violation.

But what if, however, we consider the possibility that this body does not exist in any real way? There are surely students whose approximation is so close that they receive privileges similar to those described above, but what would it mean for this body actually to exist in its full realization? What would it mean for those students trying, with varying degrees of success, to approximate that body? What would it mean for the layers of surveillance at work on all student bodies and the exertion of biopower that is distributed throughout the student population? Butler (2011) asserts that the projects of “‘being a man’ and... ‘being a woman’ are internally unstable affairs” (Butler, 2011; p. 86) indicating perhaps that in fact the ideal body – in this case the specifically ideal body dictated by the dress code – is not actually a possibility. The student whose bodily and social qualities intersect in a way that seems to align perfectly with the dress code is still subject to surveillance; he internalizes the dress code and what it means for his own self-regulation, which results in his constant – whether conscious or unconscious – efforts at maintaining the standard through dress and other bodily regulation. This effort is never finished, however; he must put in this effort each and every day that he goes to school. His continued and concerted efforts speak to the student population as to the impossibility of the standard as well as to the effective regulation from the nearest to the center to the furthest margins. If even he must make efforts to remain intelligible through this code, that means everyone must and some even more so than others.

The Impact of Fluctuating Patriarchal Ideals on Boys and the Limits of Inclusion

Additionally, while mainstream thinking engages the idea patriarchy oppresses women in many different and complex ways, it is just as important to recognize,

particularly in this theorizing around an idealized male body, that it also impacts those whom it exalts. It would be dangerous for me to consider the idealized body I point out in the dress codes in public and independent schools in Guilford County as static and fixed. In the first place, that would mean that its impact could be counter-acted simply through a set of inclusions: reconsidering regulations around shorts/skirt length to reflect more “modern” styles or, as would delight Sophie Hasty and her fellow protestors, the inclusion of leggings and yoga pants into acceptable school attire. Even deregulating “sagging” pants would not effectively dismantle the constructed “ideal” body because that ideal body is not meant to be realized or to be inclusive, nor is inclusion consistent. Even when not included in the dress code, for example, sagging pants on a white body might “pass” through surveillance, while other bodies are called out in such attire. As I have asserted previously, the ideal body must remain elusive for all in order to maintain order, surveillance, and discipline. This maintenance facilitates the production of docile citizen- students in the neoliberal model, students willing to undergo surveillance and regulation in the name of “productivity” and “community” and who are eager to participate in the neoliberal marketplace that they have learned through schooling determines their success and worth as citizens and humans. Once again, the standards of the dress code – in this case the patriarchal elements – impact students from nearest to the center to the furthest margins.

Given that dress codes change and fluctuate over time depending on mainstream social movements and fashion trends and that the ideal body is not in fact fixed, it might seem possible for dress codes to become/seem to become more inclusive over time. The

fashion industry plays a role in the greater mechanisms of social control through body management, adornment, and image, which is evident in the booming industry itself as well as this fact that trends can influence school dress codes, which feed larger social codes of conduct. But inclusion into the dress code simply reinforces its primacy, its inherent rightness and goodness. Inclusion does not challenge the parameters of what already exists, rather it exalts those parameters and, even in its bringing into the fold of new ideas or policies, manages to degrade those new ideas and policies through the relation of power generated in the process of inclusion. By deeming something acceptable and worthy of inclusion, the center once again reigns supreme in the fact that at some point that newly accepted idea or policy was unacceptable and “mercy” has been taken on it through establishing or bestowing its new acceptable position. The power dynamic between what is determined as original through its positioning as center and ability to include and what is included through “progress” maintain the original ideal as original and as impossible. Thus, school policy and its enforcement are imbued with the power to tolerate or not tolerate the presence of certain bodies in schools – those who least approximate the ideal body.

What does this shifting yet constantly-maintained idealized center mean for the student who seemingly possesses all of the qualities of the ideal body: male, white, middle class, heteronormative, and on the path toward professionalism? This ideal center impacts his subjectivity as well, dictating the lens through which he views the world, particularly in terms of sex, sexuality, gender, race, and class as well as demanding his own perfection. A boy who spends his thirteen years of schooling in an environment in

which the bodies of girls, students of color, and impoverished students are so highly and specifically regulated, subject to intense surveillance, codified as deviant, and constantly punished and “reformed” will form a worldview in which those norms become Truths. Those Truths will perpetuate the ideas that girls’ and women’s bodies must be simultaneously sexualized and purified, that bodies of color and impoverished bodies are not good enough, simply for existing as they are. Additionally, he will view himself through that lens, which will perpetuate another generation white heteropatriarchy that actualizes in multifaceted ways. For example, the focus on girls’ bodies and the ways in which their clothing and bodies can “distract” and/or “disrupt” others’ learning perpetuates a rape culture in which girls are responsible for the actions of boys. This idea appears with some frequency in debates around dress codes as well as sexual assault in general and has gained quite a bit of mainstream traction through movements like “Yes Means Yes” (“Our history,” 2010) and Twitter hashtags such as “#rapecultureis.” Unfortunately, however, I have not come across any dress code language that centers discussions with students on respecting others’ bodies regardless of how they are attired, which of course could translate into having meaningful conversations centered on not committing sexual assault as opposed to not being sexually assaulted.

The Neoliberal Citizen-Student

What this means is that the construct of the “perfect” student body does not exist in concrete form, which enables it to so successfully regulate all student bodies in the project of producing the docile citizen-student. To avoid discussing this regulation as if it is a rational, thinking entity that is top-down and static, I would like to clarify that what I

mean by “it” is the way in which students internalize dress codes as applicable to themselves in combination with the ways in which the dress code is enforced. Not all students, for example, face the same stakes each day as they prepare to dress their bodies and then take their bodies to school. A friend of mine, for example, grew up with very limited financial means and being asked to change clothes meant embarrassment at having to reveal that she had a severely limited wardrobe or even no other clothes into which to change. Having no other clothes also meant for her missing class time until new clothes could be procured. Given that she already faced additional obstacles to learning in the traditional school environment, missed class time only decreased her chances of academic success and the opportunities that might create for her. Some schools provide the option of borrowing clothes from a communal closet that contains only school-appropriate attire, though this could result in further impacts on the surveilled and disciplined student as these clothes are quite clearly the school’s and send a message to the rest of the student body about this particular student’s body and about every student’s potential (and actual) surveillance and discipline. Additionally, different body types are subject to more disciplinary action than others; I have heard countless stories from adults/parents/guardians and students alike that a student with bigger thighs, for example, is much more prone to being checked for shorts length than a student with very slender thighs wearing shorts with the same in-seam. Aside from being inherently unfair, this sends a message to both students about what bodies should be punished and what bodies should “get away with it” and under what circumstances.

This leads me to the concept of neoliberalism at work in the enforcement of the floating construct of the “ideal body” and its position as center. The contradictions of neoliberalism I explore in chapter two – amorality, depoliticized social risk, and harming the most vulnerable while exalting “help” and “humanitarianism” – facilitate the (re)deployment of the ideal body as a compulsory goal for all students as well as the creation of a docile population of citizen- students. What makes neoliberalism an important tool for modern social and political critique is the way it enables theorizing around multiple vectors of oppression that seem separate. The concept of neoliberalism makes visible the ways in which multifaceted oppression comes together, disassembles, and then reassembles differently for different bodies, which is the way in which the dress code works to regulate all students, from those at the outermost edges to those closest to and seemingly reflective of the center. If we cannot theorize about these seemingly separate forms of oppression and control as they come together in seemingly infinite ways for every different body, then resistance becomes impossible, at least in any way that would create meaningful structural change (as opposed to aforementioned disingenuous and ineffective “inclusion”).

The idea of amorality, the first contradiction of neoliberalism, in dress codes is most easily illustrated through the phrase “the real world.” Part of the motivation of dress codes is to ensure that students know how to dress professionally in order to earn respect and to be successful in “the real world.” This false construct purports that there is one universal experience of life beyond the classroom and that dress codes have no agenda or moral leanings, rather aim to best prepare and support students for life beyond

the classroom. In actuality, the evidence provided in my third chapter regarding the ideal body illustrates there is in fact an agenda, which is to further the supremacy and maintain the goodness and truth of the white, male, heteronormative, middle class, professional body. Additionally, especially in connection to girls' bodies and sexuality, dress codes maintain a clear moral stance on the sexuality of young people, which is that it simply should not exist and that if it must, it should be in line with mainstream heterosexuality and normative gender performance. This aligns with the theories posited by Nancy Lesko (2001) that the industrial revolution-era roots of the compulsory public education system in Western Europe and the United States dictates a proper order of maturation in which students go to school, find employment, find a suitable heteronormative partner to wed, and then engage their sexuality for the purpose of reproduction. Furthermore, though dress codes work to hide or sanitize sexuality (Alexander, 2005) in the classroom, they also reinforce the sexualization of girls in particular through a hyperfocus on girls' bodies as well as specific eroticization of body parts such as groins, breasts, midriffs, and shoulders. Such explicit mentions of these body parts maintains a focus on them as sexual, maintains a focus on the primary purpose of girls at school being sexuality (also to be interpreted as finding a good mate/potential spouse), and serves as a constant reminder of the imperative to desire these attributes of girls if a student is a boy or to be desirable to boys in these ways if a student is a girl. Clearly, the cloak of preparation for "the real world" disguises a moral agenda meant to reinforce heteropatriarchy.

With regard to depoliticized risk, the previous example of an impoverished student's experience with the dress code serves to demonstrate this contradiction at work in dress codes. The logic is that everyone makes decisions about how they bring their body to school under the same conditions, but that is patently false. Whether material, corporeal, or philosophical, students and their caregivers/parents do not make these decisions under the same circumstances, nor are they at the same level of priority for all. Furthermore, much of the policy of dress code stems from a desire to maintain safety, hence the outlawing of specific colors in schools as well as headgear, excessively baggy clothing, and gang paraphernalia. What this enables, however, is to blanket any prohibition or bodily regulation in the name of safety, even at the expense of a student's needs or the circumstances under which they make decisions regarding dress for school each day. As Sandra K. Soto (Cheng et al & Duggan et al, 2012/2013) asserts, whenever something is criminalized – as is the case for red clothing, for example, in Guilford County Schools – systems become linked together; in this case, the carceral system (given the prohibition of red being linked to red's association with gang activity) and the educational system. While public rhetoric touts education as the greatest opportunity and the way in which the American Dream is most fruitfully realized, the ways in which risk is depoliticized in the dress code and made supposedly equal for all students and the primacy of safety that results in links between schools and prisons illustrate that in fact schools and navigating their dress codes are fraught with risk for marginalized bodies.

Finally, the tension between harming the most vulnerable while bestowing aid upon that same population is at work in dress codes. Once again, authors of dress codes

claim that learning to abide by these codes provides priceless life advice for achieving success in “the real world,” yet it does so at the expense of devaluing the corporealities of most of the student population. In conducting the research for this project I found that, despite my stated focus on document as opposed to anecdotal analysis, everyone wanted to share stories of their encounters with student dress – as student, parent, teacher, or visitor to a school – in which they found something to be absolutely unacceptable. Most of this stemmed from desires for students to represent themselves well in the world, once again preparation for “the real world” stakes its claim on student bodies. Rarely did I hear in these volunteered anecdotes nor did I read in any dress codes any concern for or understanding that not only are bodies different from each other , but that they are different from each other in complex and nuanced ways and that they play a key role in how students see themselves, the world, and their place in it. To claim simply that dress code policies and the enforcement of these dress codes (which, admittedly runs the gamut from one-on-one conversations to simply giving out detention slips with no context whatsoever) “helps” students be their best selves is delusional at best and an insidious mechanism of social control at worst. These three contradictions of neoliberalism that are at work in dress codes illustrate the immense impact that learning about bodies and dress through dress codes has on students’ subjectivities , which at its core is engineered to produce the constantly-surveilled, docile, citizen-student.

Resistance through Subversive Repetition: (Re)Orienting, Passing, and Redistributing the Law of the Dress Code

Having considered what it is that must be resisted, in this case the multifaceted ideal body elucidated in chapter three and the multiple vectors of oppression made visible through theorizing around neoliberalism, it is now possible to explore how that resistance can take place. Sara Ahmed's (2006) consideration of orientation and of the experience of orientation will be useful in this task in that orientation can lead to disorientation and reorientation through the policies of dress codes. Additionally, Judith Butler's (2006) assertions about resistance through subversive repetition and using bodies to confuse and redistribute the law, in combination with Bordo's (1993) and Grosz's (1994) similar analyses, will enable thinking around ways in which to use the landscape of the dress code to one's advantage in resisting and dismantling it. This leads to a consideration of how we define difference, how that impacts subjectivity, and the ways in which those definitions can be confused and resisted. Finally, Butler's (2011) work around what is at stake in the act of "passing" also helps center thinking around the realities and risk surrounding the having of a body in a school setting, an idea of the utmost importance when considering the tension between creating change and losing lives.

Before I discuss the ways in which it may or may not be possible to find gaps in dress code policy – portals in the matrix of intelligibility built by dress code policy in secondary schools – and how to use the landscape of the dress code in order to resist that very landscape, it is important to acknowledge the risks of resisting dress codes and the ways in which that risk varies from body to body. I find it useful here to revisit my own

story of being “dress coded” as it comes into tension with a moment in which I, in my role of teacher, “dress coded” a student. While I was taken aback, ashamed, and confused by being surveilled, punished, and reformed by my school’s dress code and the dean of girls, I come from a white, upper-middle-class family where the value and efficacy of hard work is a central value. My father is the first in his family to graduate from college and did work very hard as a working-class boy and then as a Catholic, Polish Midwestern college graduate living and working in the Protestant, Anglo-Saxon deep South to advance through the ranks in his professional life and raise his family comfortably in the suburbs of Atlanta. Naturally, his whiteness, heteronormativity, and proper masculinity (among other facets of his identity) assisted him in achieving what he achieved, but he also put in hard work. This family background and value system influenced me in my decision of how to react to my own experience with the dress code: I would work harder to be what I was supposed to be, and that “hard work” took the form of never wearing shorts to school again for the rest of my high school or college careers. I knew my body “was not right” so I took the appropriate steps to disguise that within the learning environment and even, in a clear victory for the greater system of bodily regulation that dress codes contribute to, turned that lens of scrutiny on the rest of my body to see what else I could do to be the “right” student, which took the form of high-neck shirts and no sleeveless tops or dresses.

Ten years later, in the wake of newly announced, more-stringent dress code regulatory policy, I stopped a student in the hall to request that she choose longer shorts in the future. I did not ask her to change in that moment, nor did I ask her to call parent

to bring her new clothes. I thought I was “helping” her; helping her “get by” in school and helping her dress “appropriately” in “the real world.” It came from a genuine place of empathy – I had been in her shoes before, had gotten the message about my bodily wrongdoings, has disguised/fixed them, and had therefore been academically, professionally, and personally successful. But this young woman would not hear me on these terms. She looked at me incredulously when I told her what I thought was my enlightening story about dressing my body and her incredulity transformed into outright resistance when I told her about never wearing shorts again. For her, losing the choice of what to wear and how to look in her body was more criminal than anything I could have done to her in that moment. She simply refused my advice. And she could. She was white, tall, thin, beautiful, very smart, and came from a wealthy family with some measure of prominence in the community. If her identity did not lie at that intersection, if her identity were much further from the center of the ideal than it was, the risk likely would have been too great for her to make that choice, whether consciously or unconsciously. It is with this in mind that I consider the ways in which resistance is and is not possible within the sexed, sexualized, gendered, racialized, and classed matrix of dress code policy.

Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology* (2006) explores the lived experience of “orientation” – specifically the idea of sexual orientation and “orientalism” – through the lens of queer theory. Ahmed reconsiders the work of classical phenomenology, most notably that of Edmund Husserl (1969, referenced in Ahmed, 2006), in order to consider what remains unseen through these considerations of the experience of orientation. She

asserts, through the theories of Franz Brentano, that “consciousness is intentional; it is directed toward something” and that “what is perceived depends on where we are located” (Ahmed, 2006; p. 27). She goes on, however, to incorporate Merleau-Ponty’s point that “the word perception indicates a direction rather than a primitive function” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 quoted in Ahmed, 2006; p. 27), which means that our perceptions are dictated by our direction. She then goes on to question Husserl’s experience of writing at his desk and the absolutes she sees at work in that description. She questions what would have happened if Husserl had turned around, looked in a different direction, as well as the intentionality of turning and directing one’s gaze and the impact that has on one’s perception of the world and ultimately one’s subjectivity. She describes her queer phenomenology as the “one that faces the back, which looks ‘behind’ phenomenology, which hesitates at the sight of the philosopher’s back” (Ahmed, 2006; p. 29). It is here that Ahmed makes a crucial point about philosophy, experience, and truth: that we like to imagine that a philosopher is thinking widely and deeply, but that in fact a philosopher is oriented and that orientation impacts what that philosopher sees and thinks. Thus, the notion of truth is lost in this assertion in reimagining the concept of orientation through the specific example of the writer’s orientation at their writing desk.

Ahmed goes on to apply this thinking to the term “sexual orientation.” She begins with a consideration of Merleau-Ponty’s assertion that “subjects ‘straighten’ any queer effects” and have a tendency to “see straight” (Ahmed, 2006; p. 65) and expands on this point to explore the ways in which we are given to certain orientations/directions of perception in order to see the world as “straight.” The effect of this is to reconsider desire;

our orientation creates a “bodily horizon” (Ahmed, 2006; p. 66) which dictates what is in and out of reach. In other words, we can only desire what we are oriented towards and what is therefore within our gaze, our reach. Having an orientation is the equivalent, through Ahmed’s exploration of the term, of being directed, indicating a construction of sexuality in line with Foucault’s (1990) assertions about the deployment of sexuality and the use of biopower in surveilling, disciplining, and ultimately controlling populations.

It is easy to see the ways in which dress code policies represent an orientation on the world. Meant to straighten (with regard to sexuality), whiten, professionalize, and prioritize the male gaze, dress codes, depending on how they are enforced, can strong-arm students into a particular worldview. The focuses of the dress code demand importance be placed on certain body parts of certain bodies, criminalize certain activities (despite not being explicitly linked with the carceral system, we see how the educational and carceral systems intersect in schools through the dress code), and shame certain ways of coming to school and learning. In combination with claims of moral neutrality and purported aims at “helping” students prepare for “the real world”, this orientation and its constant (re)inforcement can result in an orientation, the horizon of which is the white, male, heteronormative, middle class, professional body and nothing else. But Ahmed wondered what Husserl would see if he turned in his chair at his writing desk and what experience of writing and philosophy would result. I am compelled, therefore, to ask what would happen if students (and perhaps parents, administrators, and teachers) turned from the orientation that the dress code provides. What would the experience of having a body at school then become?

Judith Butler explores a turn both from and within that orientation in “Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion” (2011) particularly through the concepts of drag and passing as well as in her examination of Foucault’s story of Herculine (2006) and the Herculine’s potential to confuse and redistribute categorization and law. Additionally, Butler, in the closing of *Gender Trouble* (2006) asserts that “[t]he critical task for feminism is not to establish a point of view outside of constructed identities...rather, [it is] to locate strategies of subversive repetition enabled by those constructions, to affirm the local possibilities of intervention through participating in precisely those practices of repetition that constitute identity and, therefore, present the immanent possibility of contesting them” (Butler, 2006; p. 201). Drag, passing, Herculine, and subversive repetition all have potential as strategies for (re)orienting from and within the dress code.

In “Gender is Burning” (2011), Butler analyzes the film *Paris is Burning*, which documents drag shows and the lives of those who engage in drag both for entertainment and in their daily lives, and questions whether it reproduces the culture “which appears to arrange always and in every way for the annihilation of queers” (p. 84) or if it actually provides spaces for resistance to and reworking of that same culture. This warrants comparison with dress codes in that the drag that the subjects of the film engage in and the drag that students in secondary schools engage in both aim to reproduce a center, a norm, the best approximation of which ensures better life chances and, for many, survival. But a norm, as illustrated above, is not an actual body, but a shifting ideal regulating performance that is actually impossible to attain. Additionally, Butler

theorizes that to consider drag simply as imitation, however, is to reinforce heterosexuality and normative gender performance as original and natural, a desire and accompanying anxiety that Butler sees heterosexuality to be fraught with. Finally, Butler also sees “both a sense of defeat and a sense of insurrection” in the drag represented in *Paris is Burning* and it is the tension between defeat and insurrection where I see the potential for student resistance to dress codes.

Butler begins her examination of the film by emphasizing the reprimand, similar to Foucault’s idea that the subject comes into being through being pathologized by the law, thus becoming a viable juridical subject. To that end, Butler asserts that the “reprimand does not merely repress or control the subject, but forms a crucial part of the juridical and social formation of the subject. The call is formative, if not performative, precisely because it initiates the individual into the subjected status of the subject” (Butler, 2011; p. 82). Thus, for dress codes, students come into subject status only through the call-and- response process between law/dress code and subject/student. By this logic, a viable form of resistance might be to resist the call of the dress code entirely in order to avoid being defined and performing subjectively through its terms. Butler reminds us, however, that “[t]he ‘I’ who would oppose its construction is always in some sense drawing from that construction to articulate its opposition” (Butler, 2011; p. 83), meaning that the student who gets dressed and brings their body with them to school at all is always-already answering the call of the dress code. Here, we see the need to resist

from within, through imitation and passing, even though Butler asserts that the drag documented in Paris is Burning is “neither an efficacious insurrection nor a painful resubordination, but an unstable coexistence of both” (Butler, 2011; p. 95).

The girls I mention in the introduction to this work engaged in both an “efficacious insurrection” and a “painful resubordination” by coming to school dressed, in their words, as boys. They wore overly large basketball shorts, baggy t-shirts, athletic shoes, and scowls. They wanted to make the point that girls were being treated unfairly in the outlawing of Nike shorts (a specific style of Nike shorts known among students simply as “Nike shorts”) for girls while boys were permitted to wear “casual” athletic gear to school all the time. The girls’ clothes and body language indicated complete acquiescence to the dress code’s demand for the white, heteronormative, middle class male body by becoming that body as much as they could. They literally did everything they could – short of changing bodies – to imitate and approximate that body they discerned was demanded by the dress code. But it did not look right on them; they were not dressed, as girls, for the male gaze, and therefore successfully resisted just a small fraction of that component of the dress code. This resistance garnered attention from teachers and administrators, but a different attention than if they had chosen to conduct their resistance by continuing to wear the Nike shorts (deemed too short for school) or wearing even shorter shorts. In that case, they simply would have maintained the same surveillance through the male gaze, which in this case was the controlling factor as opposed to the actual clothing. By dressing as they did, they did in fact turn to Althusser’s metaphorical call, but they reoriented the call, perhaps not entirely, but they

created a few degrees of a metaphorically resistant turn. They acted precisely according to the rules, but in confusing the rules they caused a disruption in the system that garnered attention, focused in this case on the ways in which dress codes are gendered.

It is important to note that many factors enabled this resistance to be effective and for the girls to not be punished; these were popular, thin, high-achieving, white girls who came from upper-middle-class families. They were very close to center` already so reorienting the code for them did not require an entire directional change, but a more subtle one. While their resistance was genuinely effective in challenging the male gaze of the dress code, I am left wondering what possibilities exist for students who operate further from the center, whose bodies might already disrupt and confuse the center so much that their surveillance is already heightened and the stakes are already higher. I find that Butler's (2006) exploration of Foucault's writings about Herculine Barbin, a nineteenth-century French hermaphrodite, provides some insight into how marginalized bodies can confuse and redistribute the law. Herculine is an interesting case study in resistance not because she manages to be many things at once (male, female, heteronormative, homosexual), but because her experience illustrates that "[t]o be sexed... is to be subjected to a set of social regulations, to have the law that directs those regulations reside both as the formative principle of one's sex, gender, pleasures, and desires and as the hermeneutic principle of self-interpretation" (Butler, 2006; p. 130). In other words, Herculine's experiences as a hermaphrodite in nineteenth-century Europe

illustrates the discursive production – as opposed to natural existence – of sex, gender, pleasure, and desire through juridical law as well as the ways in which one interprets oneself within that law.

The ways in which we culturally produce and determine difference, it would seem, have a firm grip on who we are within society as well as how we define ourselves. It is impossible actually to exist outside these terms of difference because even though, according to Butler, Herculine “is ‘outside’ the law... the law maintains this ‘outside’ within itself. In effect, s/he embodies the law, not as an entitled subject, but as an enacted testimony to the law’s uncanny capacity to produce on those rebellions that it can guarantee with – out of fidelity – defeat themselves and those subjects who, utterly subjected, have no choice but to reiterate the law of their genesis” (Butler, 2006; p. 144). Butler further illustrates this point by referencing Irigaray’s exposure of the false binary of Self and Other and the ways in which Western philosophy always determines the feminine in terms of the masculine. This is at work in the dress code: the margins are determined by the white, masculine, heteronormative, middle class, professional male body and can only be intelligible through that lens as either in compliance or in violation of those laws. But since Butler asserts that perhaps Herculine is representative of the mark of the feminine in the terms Irigaray calls for, is there a way for student bodies to contain multiple symbolisms in the same way? In combination with “strategies of subversive repetition” (Butler, 2006; p. 201), could this engender effective resistance?

Elizabeth Grosz (1994) argues that the line between subordination to regimes of surveillance and control and resistance to such regimes is a fine one, which makes

resistance through repetition of norms tricky at best. Grosz goes on to point out that “[a]ll of us, men as much as women, are caught up in modes of self-production and self-observation; these modes may entwine us in various networks of power, but never do they render us merely passive and compliant” (Grosz, 1994; p. 144). She goes on to assert the potential of this position in that a subject’s “enmeshment in disciplinary regimes is the condition of the subject’s social effectivity, as either conformist or subversive” (Grosz, 1994; p. 144). If this is true, then everyone who is subject to the dress code, as author, enforcer, or object of regulation, is ideally positioned for resistance as much as discipline and punishment. By repeatedly engaging difference and sameness in the exact terms of the dress code, students can bow to the surveillance in panoptical form, monitoring themselves as much as they are monitored by others. But by engaging these terms in multiplicitous ways, they can confuse and incite resistance all the same.

I consider the bowtie, long a symbol of “preppy,” white, upper class patriarchy, to be a prime example. Recently appropriated by hip hop and “hipster” culture, the bow tie (and the “preppy” dress that accompanies it) represents both an attempt to dress the part of successful capitalist in order to gain respect and access according to the culturally symbolic terms of difference already in place and to confuse those terms to by relocating the tie around the neck of someone not traditionally associated with its historical symbolic meaning. This reclamation of the bow tie as resistance is possible only through assigning it the multiple and even contradictory meanings while simultaneously gaining culturally “center” status through the act of wearing it. The bow tie and such reclamation of it as a symbol of resistance also points to the important ability of some students to

“code switch” in their speech, body language, and dress. Wearing the bow tie while not having the white, middle class, professional, heteronormative male body it symbolizes not only serves as resistance, but shows how students know how to negotiate the body that they have and the restrictions (surveillance, disciplining, and punishment) that go with it. This is a delightful tension between acquiescing to the demands of systems of social control while simultaneously calling out their position as such. It is important to note, however, as I have frequently, that not all bodies can code switch and/or resist in this way either because the stakes are too high or they are bodies that are invisible within a school, which would make such attire more a statement of successful control than living in the tensions of such control.

Susan Bordo (1993) demands that we “move beyond the valorization of historically suppressed values and toward ‘endless complication’ and a ‘dizzying accumulation of narratives’” (Bordo, 1993; p. 267), illustrating the imperative to embrace, acknowledge, seek out and understand the intersecting definitions of difference, the terms of the juridical law that create the student-subject, and the accompanying forces of marginalization at work in dress codes in order to further complicate and resist those intersecting marginalizations. Complaints about rising hemlines and plunging necklines in conjunction with rising temperatures each spring illustrate this very possibility for resistance. Exposed cleavage, I believe, is particularly effective at complicating definitions of difference, especially when viewed through the lens of Nancy Lesko’s (2001) theory of the proper order of maturation that I discuss in chapter three and Bryant Keith Alexander’s (2005) notions around efforts to always sanitize bodies in the

classroom to remove sexuality, race, gender, etc. from the learning process. For a girl to “have” breasts in the classroom – to embrace, acknowledge, reveal parts of breasts – both reinscribes the terms of difference in the dress code and resists them. By learning, writing, discussing, and questioning while also having breasts, a girl can resist the proper order of maturation as well as compulsory sanitizing of her gender, sex, and sexuality in order to be multiplicitous. Having been confronted with teachers lamenting exposed cleavage, I have asked genuinely if they feel that learning simply cannot take place when there are breasts in the room and if not, then why bother having bodies that have breasts in the room in the first place, covered or uncovered?

These considerations of shifting orientation, turning within and against the call into juridical subjectivity, and resisting through subversive imitation and confusing multiplicities of difference represent very small possibilities for resistance. They also have very real and violent limits. Some bodies can expose more cleavage in order to reconsider what learning in a classroom with breasts in it might mean. Other bodies have more at risk in exposing cleavage. Some bodies can (re)appropriate a bow tie and make a statement of resistance through the act of wearing it, while others will simply remain invisible to the center, regardless of their neckwear. Some students can refuse to just never wear shorts again so they can make it through unscathed, while others cannot risk missing class time if their shorts are deemed inappropriate and they are sent home. For many bodies, missing that class time or giving authorities in school any chance to determine that black/poor/homosexual/trans/female/etc. bodies do not, in fact, belong in or excel in school or in “the real world” is too great a risk. It is with these bodies in mind

that I turn to what seems like impossible resistance and Dean Spade's (2013) call for a rejection of inclusion in favor of intersectional resistance meant to create cultural crisis and incite change for marginalized bodies.

Structural Change and Cultural Crises: The Possibilities for Change through Intersectional Resistance

While finding the pores in the matrix of intelligibility constructed through the regulations of the dress code is important in that they reveal possibilities for everyday resistance, however limited in terms of which bodies can conduct this resistance, it is also critical to consider theoretical and concrete potential for sweeping structural change. In light of Foucault's understanding of power as multivalent, oppressive, and productive, this potential ought to be located everywhere, in every relational moment that generates a power dynamic. Additionally, Dean Spade's theorizing centers on the idea of rejecting inclusion (mostly centered on the legal system) in favor of creating broad structural change, especially through intersectional resistance. This vision recognizes that just as identity is complex and intersectional and power is multivalent with the potential to oppress as well as engender resistance, marginalized bodies experience oppression through multiple vectors, therefore resistance to and changing marginalization requires attention to these multiplicities.

In order to understand and apply Spade's argument for intersectional resistance to the dress code, it is crucial to connect his argument about population control to theoretical aims and the real, material effects of the dress code. In *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (1990), Foucault posits that the most crucial development in social ordering is the

deployment of sexuality. Rather than taking sexuality as a given and a naturalized facet of all human experience according to the ordering we know now (e.g. homosexuality, bisexuality, heterosexuality), Foucault argues that it is produced in order to regulate and control. By seeing sexuality in this way, Foucault asserts, in the words of Butler, that “‘sex’ [is] an effect rather than an origin” (1990, p. 129). Yet, mainstream medicalized discourse locates sex as purely biological, devoid of any cultural construction or control, which results in and directly correlates with “pure,” “natural” sexual desire. This connection of biology and desire results in what Foucault determines is a crucial element of modern society: biopower. This power to control life, as opposed to the power to control death, intensifies the political meaning of the body and the ways in which its regulation contributes to socioeconomic and political generations of power. Spade (2013) refers to this as “population control” in order to “[remove] the focus from discrete incidents or individuals and [allow] for an analysis of multiple systems that operate simultaneously to produce harms directed not at individuals but at entire populations” (Neubeck and Cazenave, 2001; Ross 2006 referenced in Spade, 2013; pp. 1035-1036). This definition of population control and an understanding of the concept of biopower put forth by Foucault illustrate the regulations and ideal bodies disseminated through dress codes as a form of population control.

Spade argues that rights-based resistance to such oppression as he describes population control to be is inadequate because combinations and intersections of structures create complex forces and realities of oppression. Spade incorporates a critique of neoliberalism into this analysis by shedding light on places where rights-based

resistance/movements remain within a framework of deservingness and the neutrality of the law. Furthermore, Spade emphasizes the imperative to historicize violence and oppression in order to reject the neutrality of law. For example, though slavery in the United States is now illegal, institutions meant to control the population of people of color in the United States such as the prison systems still maintain the subjugation of the entire population of people of color. Spade elaborates on and supports this notion through the terminology of population control and Foucault's theorizing on biopower in the modern era. Instead of rights-based resistance movements, Spade encourages a focus on the intersections of many forms of violence – based to any degree on the intersectional identity of individuals – that create population-controlling oppression. Spade (re)engages Crenshaw's (1991) ideas on intersectionality for use in resisting oppression, describing intersectionality as "a way of thinking about subjection that rejects both the declaration of a universal experience of a given vector of harm and the notion that people affected by multiple vectors are enduring conditions that are simply experiences of single-axis harm added together" (Spade, 2013; p. 1050). Thus, for Spade "[t]he production of administrative classification systems that distribute life chances, whether those classification systems are overtly linked to racial and gender categories or whether they are facially neutral, is coconstitutive with the ongoing processes of state-building that produce the United States" (Spade, 2013; p. 1050).

If we consider the ideal student body once more – white, heteronormative, properly masculine, middle class, professional, and male – it is easy to see how Spade's analysis of the processes of state-building intersect with the processes of secondary

schooling. I have mentioned multiple times in this project the idea of the “citizen student;” that is to say, the student who is best prepared to participate in mainstream life in the United States, culturally, socially, and economically. In addition to domestic life, this student also is willing and able to contribute to global flows of capital that perpetuate divisions and imbalanced power dynamics between the global North and the global South as well as facilitate neoimperialist policies and actions. In short, this citizen student’s position as subject is determined through the paradoxes of neoliberalism described in the second chapter of this project. Here we see a clear intersection between the “processes of state- building that produce the United States” that Spade analyzes and the project of modern secondary schooling. Going to school and learning are clearly political acts and, through this analysis we can see that bringing one’s body to school each day is just as intensely political.

This political act of bringing one’s body to school and negotiating codes of conduct, particularly the dress code, exists in the complex intersections of various forces of oppression. While the small acts of resistance described in the sections above result in infinite tiny ruptures in the system that could potentially result in a larger tear in the fabric of the matrix of intelligibility and control, this kind of resistance is not enough for Spade and may in fact, if pursued exclusively, prove the impossibility of resistance as dress codes evolve to meet these challenges. What he calls for instead is "broad-based resistance formations made up of constituencies that come from a variety of vulnerable subpopulations but find common cause in concerns about criminalization, immigration, poverty, colonialism, militarism, and other urgent conditions” (Spade, 2013, p.1049).

While not all of these particular concerns may work in schools, many are and this provides an excellent starting point for more broad-reaching change through the creation of cultural crises.

I see one important potential avenue for creating these crises that have the potential to push forward broader change beyond the simple inclusion that the students at Haven Middle School advocated, despite the fact that many of their points about imbalanced gender focus reveals mechanisms of population control. This potential avenue for creating change is the ideal of embodied pedagogy as illustrated by Alexander (2005). Alexander asserts that much of the project of modern schooling is to sanitize the bodies – teachers’ and students’ – in the classroom despite that fact that “[o]ur sexualized and racialized bodies always signal a history, an enfleshed knowledge that may or may not, to our students, obviously inform our pedagogy and our orientation to the subject matter.” (Alexander, 2005; p. 258). This aligns with Lesko’s aforementioned thoughts on the proper order of maturation in which the student body does not become sexualized until after having received an education, obtained employment, and wedding a spouse.

Both Alexander’s and Lesko’s thinking around the sanitized and/or limited role of the body in education points back directly to long-standing philosophizing around the body and the mind, particularly that of Descartes. In Descartes’ dualist philosophy, the mind and the body are separate in definite and absolute ways, a philosophical assertion enabled by Humanist and Enlightenment obsession with reason as the main factor in man’s inevitable, positive progress toward perfection and domination over the animal kingdom. This separation and its resultant progress (deemed unquestionably positive) has

become the crux of the modern project of education. The dress code's very existence, especially ubiquitous phrasing around minimizing distraction or disruption, illustrates the desire to overcome the distractions (politically-assigned difference, desire, need, excess, unruliness, etc.) of the body in order to develop and prioritize the mind. In my own experience as an educator, cultural norms dictate that I depoliticize myself, which includes disembodiment myself, in order to be the most effective and neutral force for education possible. An avenue for radical change, however, could arise if teachers channeled their corporealities into their pedagogy and into their daily practice. For Alexander, true "[t]eaching occurs at those intersections where sanctioned content collides with lived experience... Those moments when the personal becomes political and the pedagogical imperative is to articulate understanding without silencing voice - that of both the student and of the teacher" (Alexander, 2005; p. 253).

I often wonder, upon having a student's exposed cleavage pointed out to me, for example, what personal body anxieties the dress code enforcer experiences and how enforcing the dress code serves as a cover for those individual and societal complexities. I also wonder if the dress code enforcer in that moment really feels that we will all forget that that student has cleavage even when it is covered up. And for that matter, what it means to participate in the act of forgetting the existence of that cleavage. To actively forget a student is a girl, or is black, or is living in poverty is a violent act in which we depoliticize students' bodies and their lived experience, sending and reinforcing the neoliberal message that in fact the world is neutral and the only oppression that individuals face they bring upon themselves. To embrace having a body, the value of

“enfleshed knowledge,” and the political nature of going to school is a radical notion that can push against the entire structure and purpose of a dress code. To acknowledge that bodies have real cultural, political, and economic meaning that we very actively work to disguise would not only expose the dress code for what it does, but would demand that students reconsider the act and purpose(s) of learning as well. Taken in combination with subversive acts of repetition and embracing multiplicitous subjectivity, embodied pedagogy and embodied learning can generate the cultural crises and counterforce necessary for a greater cultural and structural (re)orientation; a turn from neoliberal values, surveillance, delinquency, punishment, and control that looks toward social justice and equity within secondary schools. Bringing together mind and body, living in and questioning the tensions of that intersection in the act of learning, may push us to reconsider all the messiness that comes with having a body outside of school as well – particularly what bodies’ roles are in determining and disciplining socially- and politically-determined difference. This resistance can result in an unavoidable and potentially productive focus on deeply entrenched, long-standing structures of oppression that run deep in the education system, which is symptomatic of the greater social and political harms done by neoliberalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy and the structures that enable them.

Conclusion: Constructed Bodies, Disguised Resistance, and a Call for Action

This project has illustrated the ways in which bodies, particularly bodies in Western secondary school settings, are culturally constructed and how those constructions have deep roots in Western philosophy. These roots historicize

mainstream, modernist, medicalized discourses around bodies that essentialize sex, sexuality, gender, race, and class. Through this analysis I engage in an exploration of what exactly a body is and how it comes to be gendered, class, racialized, sexed, and sexualized. Additionally, this undertaking led me to a closer understanding of the ways in which bodies are, as a result, subject to discipline, punishment, and surveillance and in what particular ways depending on the kind of body and the social norms at stake. Finally, this historicizing of the body and bodily discipline and surveillance led me to a consideration of secondary schools in general and the ways in which schools serve as mechanisms of social control.

Taking this as my epistemological starting point, I then engaged in a close analysis of thirty-one dress codes in Guilford County, North Carolina, (twenty-eight from state- administered schools and three from independent schools) which revealed that the preferred body in these secondary schools is white, heteronormative, properly masculine, middle class, professional, and male, which enabled me to expose the ways in which conformity is demanded and marginalization is assured for most, if not all, students who are subject to these dress codes. This addresses the questions I pose in my introduction pertaining to the ways in which dress codes impact school experience and identity formation as well as the kinds of value ingrained in students – as a mechanism of social control – through both the simple existence of dress codes as well as the ways they are enforced. Most importantly, this work led me to consider the ways in which schools support a particular kind of body – the body mentioned above – in learning and how students with bodies that do not conform closely enough to this ideal miss out not only on

opportunities within schools (perhaps due to missed class time to change or suspensions for repeated violations in addition to internal struggles and concerns over confidence), but more importantly are not supported in achieving equitable outcomes in learning and thinking.

Finally, I considered ways in which resistance is possible and impossible, for whom, and to what end(s). While it is difficult to combat mainstream “knowledge” about the body, gender, sex, sexuality, race, and socioeconomics based on positivism, it is crucial to the project of teaching and learning that these constructions be revealed and subsequently deconstructed. Here I engaged Foucault’s (1990) definition of power as multivalent, oppressive, and productive and what that means for opportunities for resistance to dress codes and bodily surveillance and discipline. I also made use of Judith Butler’s (2006) heteronormative matrix of intelligibility in order to understand bodily expectation and the stakes therein as well as possibilities for small resistance, portals through the matrix, that can enable students to subvert the dress code and its surveillance and discipline and small, but effective ways. Finally, both Foucault’s understanding of power and looking for portals through Butler’s matrix led me to consider what it would mean to create bigger, more structural change. Using Dean Spade’s (2013) call to understand oppression as complex and multilayered, I considered a multilayered approach to resistance, which I locate as most effective in the concept of embodied pedagogy (Alexander, 2005). To break through the barriers of the sanitized body (Lesko,

2001) and challenge that construction of both teacher and student would produce a larger political and cultural crisis with the potential to change our understanding of the body, learning, and schooling and the ways in which these are in tension with one another.

Through these three vectors of considering the dress code, I reveal the real curriculum of the dress code, one of social control. It is important to note the tension between the dress code in schools and the dress code outside of schools. The dress code in school is explicit, binding, and restricting and one's success as a student is contingent upon the degree to which one executes that dress code, how difficult that is depending of course on how close to the ideal body one's own body is. As I illustrate previously, school leadership emphasize through the language of the dress code and its enforcement how the dress code is a way to help students prepare for the "real world" and in this assertion they reveal the larger network of social control that all students must negotiate upon graduation. As I illustrate in my explorations of the complexities, subtleties, and paradoxes within neoliberalism, there is no formally-written dress code for students navigating the world as adults, whether that means in employment, in social interactions, in political life, etc., but there are expectations for appearance, depending on the degree to which a person sees her/himself as participating neoliberal social/political/economic realms. Depending also on the amount of privilege a person already has – whether that is whiteness or having been "schooled" extensively at some point on how to dress, speak, hold oneself, etc. – dressing, acting, and looking "the part" varies in difficulty and has widely differing outcomes. What this tells us is that the dress code is not simply an arbitrary secondary schooling notion, but is actually a rare instance of explicit

acknowledgement of social control, made possible through the popular discourse of raising children through strict and clear limits and processes (Lesko, 2001), even though those limits become much less clear upon leaving the secondary school setting. This makes the project of resisting the dress code that much more important.

It is at this point in analyzing the construction of bodies in our culture and the ways in which the body is regulated in the secondary school setting that I see two crucial continuations to this project, which will aid in not only understanding corporealities in schooling, but will continue to agitate and resist in the service of social justice and broad structural change. The first continuation I see as critical is a semiotic analysis of language around bodies, language in dress codes, and the body itself. This will facilitate a deeper understanding of the constructions I explore in chapter two as well as reveal even more clearly the genealogy of the body's role in education. Additionally, a semiotic analysis will facilitate an analysis of gender, race, and sexuality not as analogous, but intersecting and interacting in complex, changing, and meaningful ways both within dress codes and in the greater cultural setting. The second crucial continuation I see is a consideration of what it really means to have a body, to bring it to school each day, and to learn in that body. While I do not rely solely (or very heavily) on numeric or testing data to reveal important truths, it is undeniable that girls, students of color, LGBTQ students, and impoverished students perform differently in school than white, heteronormative, middle class boys. Exploring the lived experience of learning in a body is critical to

making evident the multiple vectors of oppression (as opposed to isolated and/or singular forces of oppression) at work within schools, which can facilitate an exploration of those vectors in greater society as well.

When I planted the seed for this project two years ago, I wondered sincerely if it was of much importance or if it was trite and only of concern to educated, middle- or upper-class white folks. What I discovered is that it is crucial. This is evident in my theoretical exploration of the historicized body (in philosophy, medicine, politics, etc.) in chapter two and the application of these theorists' ideas to the general trends of dress codes that I undertake in chapter three. It is evident especially in chapter three through my revealing the gendered nature of the dress code – something I feel strongly that most people expect to see in a dress code – but also in the ways in which class, race, and the values of neoliberalism clearly come into play through these regulations. It is also important through the work I do in this fourth and final chapter as this seeks to reveal sites of resistance on small and large scales. In my time working on this project, I have explained my epistemological stance and my research to those from whom I was requesting information, to my colleagues, to my family members, and to anyone who is curious. In those conversations, I have found that it is rare that someone does not want to talk about dress codes. From personal experiences to those of their children to those of their friends, almost everyone has an important and meaningful experience with bodily regulation through dress codes. This underscores not only the importance of the thinking

I have started with my work in this project, but the imperative nature of the action I have called for above. After all, despite the fact that we all must bring our bodies with us everywhere we go and must possess these bodies in everything we do, [n]o one ever says, “here I am and I have brought my body with me” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 156).

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APPENDIX A

COMPARISON OF GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS

School	% students of color	% white students	% male	% female	Tuition*	Total # of students
Andrews HS	88%	12%	56%	44%		847
Middle College at Bennett	91%	8%	0%	100%		113
Dudley HS	97%	3%	50%	50%		1358
Eastern Guilford HS	32%	68%	49%	51%		1204
Guilford College Middle School	51%	49%	36%	64%		132
Penn-Griffin HS	46%	54%	27%	73%		197
Grimsley HS	49%	51%	47%	53%		1770
Early College at Guilford	49%	51%	46%	54%		195
Middle College at GTCC-GSO	78%	22%	50%	60%		137
GTCC Middle College – High	54%	46%	47.5%	52.5%		185
High Point Central	67%	33%	51%	49%		1382
The Academy at Central	83%	17%	35%	65%		134
Middle College at GTCC – HP	58%	42%	47.5%	52.5%		124
Middle College at NC A&T	93% (specifically black)	7%	100%	0%		105
Northeastern Guilford	68%	32%	54%	46%		1055
Northern Guilford	29%	71%	52%	48%		1360
Northwest Guilford	21.5%	78.5%	52.5%	47.5%		2014

School	% students of color	% white students	% male	% female	Tuition*	Total # of students
Page HS	60%	40%	50% (7 more boys)	50%		2015
Ragsdale HS	59%	41%	51%	49%		1414
Smith HS	93.5%	6.5%	55%	45%		1273
The Academy at Smith	97.5% (Asian, Latin@, black, multi)	2.5% (other)	46%	54%		208
Southeast Guilford	38%	63%	54%	46%		1437
Southern Guilford	68%	32%	50%	50%		1170
Southwest Guilford	57%	43%	52%	48%		1467
STEM Early College at NC A&T	About 80%	About 20%	55%	45%		103
UNCG Early & Middle College	66%	34%	41%	59%		151
Weaver Academy	32%	68%	32%	68%		286
Western Guilford	60%	40%	54%	46%		1264
Greensboro Day School	19.35% (increases to 23.4% when students on I-20 visas are included)	80.65%/76.6%	52%	48%	\$20,975	341
Noble Academy	7.24%	92.76%	62.5%	37.5%	\$17,290 - \$18,050	69
Westchester Country Day School	32%	68%	57%	43%	Grade 9: \$2,828 - \$15,360 Grades 10-12: \$2,768 - \$15,720	125

KEY:

Majority students of color

Majority white students

SMOD schools